

Th. Sect.
—

THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

R. P. Anschutz

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
Degree conferred 14th December, 1928.



June 1928.

1. We begin to think when we do not take things at their face value, but seek the substantial in them. Then we do not merely and immediately respond to them. We stand away from them and judge them, distinguishing between the evanescent and the permanent in them, so that our response, when it comes, may be more delicately adapted to them. We think when we judge, and we judge when we use the category of appearance and reality. Appearance and reality is co-extensive with subject and predicate, and subject and predicate is co-extensive with thought, even if it is expressed only in such primitive interjections as "How hot!", "Rain!", "Wolf!", where the subject is suppressed because, being the appearance, it is regarded as of no importance.

At the beginning appearance and reality is merely the category used in thought. Later, men seek to promote thought by realising more fully what they are about in thinking, and then this category used in thought is reflected on as an object of thought. And then - the suggestion is inevitable - it comes to be thought that the complete knowledge which is the end of thought would be in our power, if we can only discover the nature of this reality that we seek in thought. When we want to know anything, it is argued, we want to know the reality of some appearance - this or that reality. Now if/

if we only knew what reality in general is, then without further investigation we would know what this or that reality is, since all these particular realities are only instances of the general reality. And so by that means we could come to know the reality of any appearance.

The thesis of this essay is that the pursuit of a reality in general or appearance in general is barren. The only reality there can be, it is held, is the reality of this or that appearance. There is no reality in general because there is no appearance in general. Any reality is real only in its relation to a given appearance. Apart from that appearance, it may and will be equally well regarded as the appearance of another reality. Hence any attempt to establish an absolute reality, that is, such a reality as is the reality of all appearance and the appearance of no reality, ends in self-contradiction.

The absolute reality, during the greater part of the development of European philosophy, has been envisaged as God. Even when this has not been so, still the arguments by which it has been upheld have been borrowed from Christian theology. Thus, for example, even when Hegelian absolutism has diverged from Christianity, its basis has always been the Christian arguments for the existence of God. And the same may be said of Spinoza, who, although certainly not a Christian, is yet a Scholastic. Thus any examination of the tenability of the concept/

concept of an absolute reality must centre round the Christian proofs of the existence of God. And since, as it will be argued, the final form of these proofs is the ontological argument, it is through a detailed consideration of the thought of Anselm - the first and greatest of the exponents of that argument - that the thesis of this essay is to be made out.

2. The relation of appearance and reality is one of difference in identity. The appearance is identical with the reality so far as it is the appearance of the reality: it is different from the reality so far as it is merely its appearance and not the reality itself. The ratio between the difference and the identity varies in the various uses of the category of appearance and reality.

Consider the following cases:-

- i. The appearance of a rainbow added colour to the scene.
- ii. The appearance of the sun cheered us up.
- iii. The appearance of the sun affords an indication of the weather to be expected.

She first appeared in London as Peter Pan.

The character of President Wilson appears in the Fourteen Points.

- iv. An oar in water appears to be bent.

This gives rise to an apparent contradiction.

The/

The first case is a limiting instance where it is difficult to say whether the category of appearance and reality is used at all. The sentence may mean merely that a rainbow added colour to the scene, and there appearance is equal to being and hence cannot be distinguished from reality. On the other hand, it might be held that there is a distinction implied here between the rainbow in general and its various occurrences, as there is in the second case between the sun and its various physical appearances, and then the category of appearance and reality would seem to be used. In the second case we are clearly inside the limit. We are obviously concerned here with a subsistent or continuant, whereas in the first case this is open to argument. The reality of the sun is regarded as persisting between and behind its various appearances. But the difference between the reality and appearance is here at a minimum, since no distinction is made between the various appearances of the reality. Reality is distinguished from appearance only negatively - as what is or is not hindered from appearing by atmospheric conditions - and the reality is not regarded as changing when it appears. In the third case, the appearance is distinguished from the reality positively as well as negatively. It is not merely the absence of hindrances (the clouds), which is implied in the appearance of the sun, but the sun itself is positively changed in appearing, and this is evidenced/

evidenced by the fact that its appearances are different under different conditions. This may be regarded as the normal use of the category. In the fourth case the difference between appearance and reality is envisaged as opposition, or even as contradiction. The actual appearance is contrasted with the reality behind the appearance, and so we come to say that appearances are not to be trusted.

The difference between appearance and reality implies circumstances under which the reality appears. The various degrees of difference are paralleled by the various degrees of effectiveness in which the circumstances combine with the reality to produce the appearance. In the second case, the circumstances have only a negative influence - the clouds do not prevent the sun appearing. In the third case the atmospheric conditions are regarded as affecting the appearance of the sun. As they are different, so is the appearance different, and thus from its appearance we infer the atmospheric conditions under which it appears. Similarly in the other two examples of the third case, the reality is regarded as entering into a system of relations (in one case those involved in the production of a play, and in the other those present between the various nations up to and during the War), which both allows the reality to express itself, and at the same time dictates the manner of this expression. To a certain extent the system may be accommodated to/

to the demands of any factor which enters into it, but it only accommodates itself so far as that particular factor accepts its demands in general. It is, then, not merely the actress that accounts for the appearance of Peter Pan, nor is it merely President Wilson that accounts for the appearance of the Fourteen Points. The actress requires the play (and all that that implies), the producer, the other members of the company, the theatre, and so on. President Wilson requires the whole of European history so far as that issued in the War.

This point, namely that it is not merely one reality that is involved in an appearance, but rather that reality in co-operation with other realities, comes out with greatest clearness in the fourth case. This is distinguished from the third only by the circumstance that the reality in appearing appears with the character which in some sense is the opposite of that which it has as real. Thus the oar appears as bent, while it really is straight. The chain of reasoning issues in a proposition which appears as self-contradictory, while really it is self-consistent. This may happen also in the third case, but the difference between the third and the fourth cases is that in the latter the characteristics in which appearance and reality differ are regarded as essential. We approach the upper limit of the ratio of difference and identity in appearance and reality/

reality, where the identity seems on the point of being swamped in difference. Here, obviously, if the fact that is taken to be the reality of the appearance is still to be regarded as its reality, a very real disturbing influence must be allowed for. If the reality is to be saved as the reality of this appearance, it cannot be the only reality involved. Thus the appearance of bentness in the oar placed in water must be recognised as arising from the interaction of the straight oar and the behaviour of light waves in water. And so far as the facts in isolation go, it would seem immaterial whether we regard the reality of the bent oar as the light waves and the straight oar merely as an accompanying circumstance, or vice versa.

There is thus a latent contradiction in the reference of any fact as appearance to another fact as its reality. That reality is not the reality of the appearance. It is merely one of the realities which together have brought about the appearance. This does not commonly matter, since it is not the whole of reality that is wanted. It is taken for granted that there is more in the appearance than is accounted for by the reality to which it is referred. But that is selected merely as the relevant reality, and the other realities are disregarded as irrelevant.

But when the attempt is made to find the unique reality of all appearances, this latent contradiction in the reference of appearance to reality must break out. Then there is/

is no place for the relevant and the irrelevant. We cannot believe that besides the reality to which we are referring appearances, there is another reality which co-operates with the first in producing the appearances, but which we may for the moment disregard. The very statement of our purpose precludes this: we are seeking the unique reality of appearances. But nevertheless, in spite of the fact that we cannot allow for another reality working with our unique reality to produce appearances, it will be found that another reality is assumed. Any reference of an appearance to a reality refers to other realities in conjunction with which the appearance is produced, and it is impossible to suppress this reference.

The reality cannot of itself account for its appearance, unless the appearance is simply identical with the reality. And then all that is obtained is an identical proposition. If there is a difference between appearance and reality, then a second reality must be brought in to account for the difference. If there is no second reality, then no reason can be given why the first reality issues in an appearance different from it. But it is impossible to deny the legitimacy of an appeal for such a reason. And thus if it is insisted that one, and only one, reality completely accounts for an appearance, we are faced with an enquiry which we can neither deny nor satisfy.

It may be replied that, while the second reality which accounts/

accounts for the difference between the original reality and the given appearance, may not be identical with the original reality, yet nevertheless it need not be other than that reality. It may be a part or attribute or function of that reality which occasions it to appear, and then that part or attribute or function of the reality will be all that is necessary to account for the difference between the appearance and the reality. Thus it would seem that nothing besides that reality is involved, in the sense that nothing outside is involved. (For example, 'Socrates was mortal because he was a man' means 'The death of Socrates is the appearance of the reality of Socrates so far as he was a man.').

But if the second reality is regarded as only a part or attribute or function of the original, then it cannot be said to account for the given appearance. The whole of parts or attributes or functions cannot interact with any one of its parts or attributes or functions. As a whole it is all its parts or attributes or functions in interaction. If, then, you take one of these parts or attributes or functions separately and consider its behaviour in isolation, you have broken up your original whole and substituted another for it, namely the original whole minus the part you are separately considering. The parts of a whole can interact with one another so that the whole is changed, or the whole can interact with other wholes so that its parts are changed. But the whole cannot interact with any/

any one of its parts. It can only be the whole minus the part, which interacts with that part. And thus the contention that nothing outside one reality is needed to account for a given appearance breaks down.

It is probable, however, that in any actual instances of this sort that could be alleged, it would be found that the part of the whole which, it is said, causes the whole to appear, is not merely a part of that whole. It is probable that the part initiates an appearance only in connection with another reality outside the whole of which it is a part, and then, it is obvious, a second reality is admitted as necessary for the original reality to appear, and the reduction which has just been given will not be needed. (This is the case with the death of Socrates. Socrates did not die merely because he was a man. He died because the human body which was his interacted with the hemlock which he drank.)

3. Thus in any reference of an appearance to a reality, another reality is always implied, and hence any such reference must always pre-suppose more than it states. However far the statement goes, it can always go further. However many middle terms are inserted, more can be inserted. We always work within a system, and however wide our judgment, the system is always wider. We never reach the point where system and judgment/

judgment coincide - in Scholastic language, essence and existence are never identical. The attainment of such an identification involves a contradiction, not merely for our thought, but for thought in general, that is, a contradiction in fact.. This contradiction follows on the two undeniable postulates of thought; (1) There must be difference between any appearance and the reality that is predicated of it, and (2) This difference must be accounted for, since there is identity between the appearance and the reality. The first postulate necessitates a difference between the appearance and the reality; the second forbids us to take this difference as final. Any judgment, that is to say, must be able to expand. But it cannot expand if it is the whole system, since then there would be nothing beyond it. It can expand only on the presupposition of another reality outside it. This is the position of any reference of appearance to reality (any judgment); and hence it is inferred an absolute reality is untenable, not because our faculties are insufficient to attain it, but because there is no such thing. An absolute reality must be different from (transcend) its appearances, since otherwise (if it is wholly immanent) it is a mere duplication of its appearances. But its difference from its appearances implies another reality as a circumstance conditioning its appearances, and thus controverts its claim to be absolute.

It/

It may be objected that if this sketch is a true account of the category of appearance and reality, then not only does it follow that there is no absolute reality of all appearances, but also that there is no reality of any appearance. This denial of an absolute reality, it will be said, has overreached itself. In attempting to dispose of an absolute reality, it has also disposed of any reality, and thus it has contradicted itself in denying that category which, at the beginning, was asserted to be co-extensive with knowledge. If the reference of an appearance to its reality always involves an endless process, as it does on this theory, then there can be no reference of any appearance to its reality. This endless process is not of the same kind as that involved, for example, in the number series, where although we may go as far as we like, we may also stop wherever we like and use the numbers we have so far reached, in perfect confidence that our failure to complete the series will not disturb our manipulation of these numbers. According to this account of the category of appearance and reality, on the other hand, the completion of an endless process is demanded by any use that is made of the category. If we stop short anywhere, we have failed to demonstrate our right to the category, in leaving behind us an unresolved difference between the appearance and ^{its} reality. But we must stop somewhere, and it follows therefore that no use of this/

this category can be made. And thus knowledge is impossible.

The line to be taken in answering this objection has already been indicated. In claiming that anything is the reality of appearance, we are claiming falsely. But outside religion and philosophy this claim is not made. A qualification has to be and is understood, namely that this is the reality of this appearance in a certain direction and up to a certain point. As it was previously put, the reality asserted is only the relevant reality, and not the reality in general. Of course, it cannot be asserted off-hand that this and only this is the relevant reality to any appearance, and that consequently we need only go so far and no further in the determination of that reality. The determination of relevance, any relevance, in such a fashion would assert an absolute reality in the very face of its denial. But that is not implied here. The assertion that the determination of the reality of an appearance up to a certain point (for example, the determination of π to six places of decimals) is alone relevant is an assumption not given in the appearance itself, nor yet inferred from the absolute reality of that appearance. It is an hypothesis suggested by the context of fact in relation to which the reality of an appearance is to be determined, and its truth is to be decided by its success or failure in enabling us to deal with the appearance in that context of fact as we want to deal with it. While, then, we may proceed with the determination/

determination of the reality of an appearance so far as we wish, yet there is no necessity for us to go beyond any given determination. It is true that if, on stopping anywhere, we assert that the reality we have reached is simply the reality of the appearance, then that assertion is false. But there is no reason why such an assumption should be made, and to avoid it we need only note as a qualification the point to which we have carried the determination of the reality. We may advance beyond any point in our determination of reality, and in certain contexts we must advance beyond any given point. But it does not therefore follow that we must advance beyond any point. Thus the completion of an endless process is not necessitated in the use of the category of appearance and reality. And thus the category is saved, so long as it is used only relatively, when it is recognised that the reality which has contributed to an appearance is a reality within a certain context. The typical case is that of scientific measurement, where we always measure to a certain degree of accuracy.

4. An absolute reality is such that: (1) there is no other reality besides it, since otherwise it would be relative to that reality, and (2) there is no appearance which is not its appearance, since, then, either that would be itself another reality, or it would be the appearance of another reality.

Thus/

Thus an absolute reality is the unique reality of all appearances, and there cannot be any element of difference between the appearances and their reality, since any difference would imply another reality besides it. The appearances must be completely accounted for by the reality, since there cannot be anything in them which cannot be referred to this reality. But then, failing a difference between the appearances and this reality, the appearances simply collapse into the reality, and the category of appearance and reality disappears. The reality simply is the appearances. This consequence follows inevitably on the denial of a context within which appearance and reality are located, and this denial of a context is given in the very idea of an absolute reality. It is only through the fringe of fact outside any appearance and reality that the appearance and reality are both held together and held apart, that is, related as appearance and reality. Failing a context, the facts will simply coalesce. You will not get the identity in difference which alone enables the one to be regarded as the relation of the other; you will only get abstract identity.

It may be objected: All that this shows is that it is impossible to obtain an absolute reality in the sense in which the term reality has a correlate in the term appearance. And thus the contradiction discovered in the concept of an absolute reality is simply a contradiction that has been put into it. It/

It amounts to this: Any reality is relative at least to its own appearances, and thus no reality can be absolute, since it always has a correlative in its appearances. Now, it is quite obvious that if reality has been defined as relative, then it cannot be absolute. But need reality be defined as relative? What hinders it, indeed, from being understood as 'being'? It is taken for granted that the reduction of the concept of absolute reality to 'being' is the end of the matter, but it may very well be rather its beginning. Here the issue cannot be pre-judged by definitions and here it seems obvious that there is a case for the absolute. It will not, indeed, be an absolute which enables us to distinguish between degrees of being. But it does give us a firm and final foundation for our dealings with the world, which the shifting distinctions and identities of appearance and reality do not give. Thus, granting that in the attempt to attain an absolute reality the category of reality as relative to appearance inevitably loses itself in the category of being, yet this may be accepted as an elucidation of the nature of an absolute reality, rather than as its reduction to absurdity. We have certainly got rid of the category of reality in the narrower sense (that is, as relative to appearance), but we have retained it in the wider sense (that is, as 'being' which is not relative to anything), and our grip on it is all the firmer for this elucidation. In seeking an absolute reality, what we are looking for is really/

really what is, as distinct from what is not. We wish to be able to differentiate real being from sham being. We do not wish to differentiate lesser being (appearance) from greater* being (reality). This is all that we want, and this is what we have obtained.

The answer to the first part of this objection is that reality is always correlated with appearance. The answer to the second part is that it is impossible to avoid this correlation.

It is true that the contradiction that has been found in the concept of an absolute reality is to be traced back to the original correlation of reality with appearance. But that correlation has not been put into the concept of reality; it has been found there. The real, as it is commonly understood, is correlated with the apparent, and this correlation extends into philosophy. On the other hand, it must of course be granted that philosophical issues are not to be decided by linguistic usage, and thus the attempt to save the concept of an absolute reality by dropping the correlation with appearance, must be judged solely by its ability to account for the facts. It cannot be ruled out on the ground that it is using terms in an uncommon way, even though that may cause us to suspect that it has something to conceal.

Though the correlation of appearance with reality
may/

may, at the beginning, be denied, yet it must, in the end, be asserted. It is impossible to rest in an abstract being which is pure identity, since with pure identity only identical propositions can be obtained, ('X is' or 'X has being' meaning, 'X is X'). As soon as you attempt to get beyond identical propositions (to obtain 'X is Y') you have introduced difference within your identity. And it is this difference alone which makes it worth while to assert the identity. The lumping together of everything which is, as the absolute reality, does not even enable you to differentiate sham being from real being. This Being is the being of Nothing.

Pure being (abstract identity) is self-destructive. It always leads beyond itself into the being which involves difference in identity. But this being (which, as distinct or determinate from pure or abstract being, may be called concrete/being) is simply reality understood as relative to appearance. It is judgment regarded as the copula, that is, as the integration of the terms of judgment, while the reality and appearance are the terms of judgment in their integration. Thus any attempt to substitute pure being for appearance and reality must end in the re-emergence of appearance and reality, since the assertion of pure being inevitably leads to the assertion of concrete being, and thus to the re-assertion of appearance and reality. In attempting to establish an absolute reality, it is impossible to/

to throw over reality in the narrower sense (as relative to appearance) for being which is not relative to anything, since, by that means, you simply re-introduce it. The narrower sense of reality is its only sense, and thus the reduction of an absolute reality and its appearances to pure being is a reduction to absurdity, since it is a reduction that cannot be acquiesced in. Reality and appearance must somehow emerge again from pure being.

5. The attempt to obtain an absolute reality of appearances leads to the absolute identification of what was regarded as the reality with what was regarded as its appearances. But this identification cannot be acquiesced in. Some difference must somehow be imported in order that the distinction of appearance and reality may be re-asserted. Now this distinction cannot be obtained through the identity by which the advance from appearance to absolute reality was mediated. But, it may be suggested, it can be obtained besides that identity. In a sense it is true that there is nothing beyond absolute reality, but in another sense, it is not true. There must be nothing beyond the absolute reality in the sense that that absolute reality must be quite unrestrained and unrestrainable. But so long as that is obtained, there may be something beyond it, not in any absolute sense, that is, not/

not as it itself is, but in some derivative sense, that is, as its appearances are - as the creatures of the creator. The contradiction that has been found in the concept of an absolute reality has sprung from a too abstract view of being. It has been assumed that the appearance is, just as the reality is. And yet, it is plain, the appearance is not as the reality is. It is the equivocal position of appearance staggering from being to not—being that has enabled it to be asserted that there can be no ultimate reality, on the ground that an ultimate reality both must and cannot have appearances outside itself. But if, now, it is recognised that there are degrees of being, that the appearance is, even while it is not as the reality, then it may be recognised that, while in a sense appearance is internal to the reality, in another sense it is external. It all depends on what is meant by 'is'. If what is meant is 'is absolutely', then the appearance is wholly within reality, since there is nothing beyond absolute reality. But if 'is to some extent less than absolutely' is meant, then the appearance is to that extent outside reality. And at the limit where 'is' means bare existence, then appearance and reality are spread out side by side as if there were no difference between their existences.

The real problem of a cosmological argument (that is, of a proof of an absolute reality through its appearances) then, consists/

consists in the attempt to differentiate two senses of 'being', so that, on the one hand, there is nothing beyond the absolute reality, and, on the other hand, its appearances are beyond the absolute reality. The conclusions which have been stated in the previous paragraphs may be accepted, but they are only half the truth. Besides the *nisus* between appearance and reality which leads to their identification, there is another which holds them apart. Besides absolute being, there are degrees of being. It is only if we consider the one in isolation from the other that we appear to reduce the concept of an absolute reality to absurdity. If we take the other along with it, then we save it from this absurdity. Thus any cosmological proof will contain two arguments. One will advance from appearances to reality, taking the appearances up into the reality. The other will advance from appearances to reality, leaving the appearances outside reality. This is the cosmological argument of Anselm (1).

The necessity of this statement of the cosmological argument has been obscured because of the currency of the traditional statement derived from Aristotle and fixed by Thomas. And it has been obscured because the real problem of the cosmological argument is not faced in this statement. Thomas/

(1) Monologium, Cap. III and IV.

Thomas did, of course, assert a distinction between the being of God and the being of His creatures on the basis of Aristotle's doctrine of analogical predication (1). But that distinction is not used in his proofs of the existence of God, where it is needed, and thus these proofs fail (2).

It is a legitimate criticism of the proofs of God from motion and causation that, beginning with a postulation of an infinite series, they end in denying the infinity of that series. But that criticism does not get down to the real objection to the arguments regarded as proofs of an ultimate reality. The real objection to these arguments is not that they are not based on a finite series (whether of movers and moved, or of causes and effects), but that they are based on a series. Whether or not it stops, the linear series that Thomas/

- (1) See, for example, Summa contra Gentiles, Cap. XXXII to XXXIV.

ΠIII? (2) A doctrine of degrees of being is used in his fourth argument for the existence of God. (Summa contra Gentiles, Cap. III: Summa Theologica, Quaest 2, Art. 3). But that does not save him from the charge that he neglects his own doctrine of analogical predication in establishing the existence of God. His proofs are presented in isolation - one is as good as another, and any one can stand even if all the others fall. But if he had seen what was involved in his doctrine of analogical being, he would have had to state the fourth proof as the necessary complement to any of the others.

Thomas is dealing with cannot take him to the reality that he considered God to be. When you start from anything and then pass to another thing that is connected with it in some way, and then on to a third that is similarly connected with the second, and so on, you are not getting progressively nearer to the reality of the first thing. On the contrary, you are getting further away from it. You approach nearer to the reality of a thing by filling in the context within which anything influences that thing, not by neglecting that context and advancing beyond it to another isolated influence of the first influence. The extent to which you obtain the reality of the first thing will not be determined by the length to which you go in tracing back influence along a single line, but by the extent to which you isolate and relate the converging lines of influence which meet in the thing. Thus, the further you trace back a linear series, the less will the term of that series at which you stop (if you can stop) be the reality of the initial term - the more you have neglected the context within which any two members of that series are related.

Thus, even granting that internally the cosmological proofs of Thomas are cogent, yet these proofs must still be held to fail in so far as the reality they reach fails to take account of the whole of the things of this world which are regarded/

regarded as its appearance. They fail to do this initially, since the movement of a thing or that aspect of it whereby it is regarded as having been efficiently caused, is not the whole of the thing, and this failure is aggravated the further they go. More and more even of that part of the appearance which was originally accounted for must be left out of account as the series of movers and moved, or of efficient causes and effects, progresses.

Thus in the Thomist cosmological argument, the problem of an absolute reality does not appear as the problem of reconciling the identity of the reality and its appearances (that is, the fact that only God really is) with the difference of the reality and its appearances (that is, the fact that both God and His creation are), because the problem of an ultimate reality was never realised by Thomas.

6.. Any cosmological argument which is to do justice to this problem, and so avoid the ignoratio elenchi of Thomas, must then involve two arguments:

(a) An argument which proceeds to God from the things of this world by taking up their being into God. This argument postulates a relation of dependence of one thing upon another, and ultimately on God, which is so completely thorough-going that nothing of the dependent thing is left outside/

outside that on which it depends. It is only so that God can be understood as the reality which alone is through itself, and through which all things are (1).

(b) An argument which proceeds to God from the things other than God by an ascending scale of degrees of being. This does not/

(1) This is Anselm's statement:- "Denique non solum omnia bona per idem aliquid sunt bona, et omnia magna per idem aliquid sunt magna; sed quidquid est, per unum aliquid videtur esse. Omne namque quod est, aut est per aliquid, aut per nihil; sed nihil est per nihil. Non enim vel cogitari potest ut sit aliquid non per aliquid. Quidquid igitur est, non nisi per aliquid est. Quod cum ita sit, aut est unum, aut sunt plura, per quae sunt cuncta quae sunt. Sed si sunt plura, aut ipsa referuntur ad unum aliquid, per quod sunt; aut eadem plura singula sunt per se; aut ipsa per se invicem sunt. At si plura ipsa sunt per unum, jam non sunt omnia per plura; sed potius per illud unum, per quod haec plura sunt. Si vero ipsa plura singula sunt per se, utique est una aliqua vis vel natura existendi per se, qua habent ut per se sint. Non est autem dubium quod per idipsum unum sint per quod habent ut sint per se. Verius ergo per ipsum unum cuncta sunt, quam per plura, quae sine eo uno esse non possunt: ut vero plura per se invicem sint, nulla partitur ratio; quoniam irrationalis cogitatio est ut aliqua res sit per illud cui dat esse: nam nec ipsa relativa sic sunt per se invicem. Nam cum dominus et servus referantur ad invicem, et ipsi homines qui referuntur, omnino non sunt per invicem; et ipsae relationes quibus referuntur, non omnino sunt per se invicem, quia eadem sunt per subjecta. Cum itaque veritas omnimodo excludat plura esse, per quae cuncta sunt, necesse est unum illud esse, per quod sunt cuncta quae sunt. Quoniam ergo cuncta quae sunt, sunt per ipsum unum; procul dubio et ipsum unum est per seipsum. Quaecunque igitur alia sunt, sunt per aliud et ipsum solum per seipsum. At quidquid est per aliud, minus est quam illud per quod cuncta sunt alia, et quod solum est per se. Quare illud quod est per se, maxime omnium est. Est igitur unum aliquid, quod solum maxime et summe omnium est: quod autem maxime omnium est, et per quod est quidquid est bonum vel magnum, et omnino quidquid aliquid est/

not involve a relation of dependence from one state to another, and so here the things from which the ascent to God is effected are left outside Him. It is by this approach that God is saved from vanishing into the thin smoke of pure identity to which the first argument leads, since it has provided a measure of difference between the absolute reality and its appearances which counterbalances the identity of the first argument (1).

If/

est, necesse est esse summe bonum, et summe magnum, et summum omnium quae sunt. Quare est aliquid quod sive essentia, sive substantia, sive natura dicatur, optimum et maximum est, et summum omnium quae sunt." (Monologium, Cap. III). As may be inferred from the reference at the beginning of this chapter, this argument is preceded by two others which establish the existence of (i) that which is good through itself and through which all good things are good (Cap. I). (ii) that which is great through itself and through which all great things are great (Cap. III). Thus Anselm's cosmological proof consists of four approaches to God, and not merely of two as I have stated. I have ignored the first two, since it seems obvious that their only function is to prepare for the third (as may be seen from its opening), and that when once the third is stated, they become merely particular instances of it. That through which all things are what they are is necessarily that through which good things are good and great things are great.

(1) Si quis intendat rerum naturas, velit, nolit, sentit non eas omnes contineri una dignitatis paritate; sed quasdam earum distingui graduum imparitate. Qui enim dubitat quod in natura sua ligno melior sic equus, et equo praestantior homo, is profecto non est dicendus homo. Cum igitur naturarum aliae aliis negari non possint meliores, nihilominus persuadet ratio aliquam in eis sic supereminere, ut non habeat se superiorem. Si enim hujusmodi graduum distinctio sic est infinita, ut nullus sit ibi gradus superior, quo superior alius non inveniatur; ad hoc ratio deducitur, ut ipsarum/

If a cosmological proof is to succeed, these two arguments must be held together and yet apart. Neither must be allowed to affect the other, and yet they must lie side by side to remedy each other's deficiencies. The absolute being of/

ipsarum multitudo naturarum nullo fine claudatur. Hoc autem nemo non putat absurdum, nisi qui nimis est absurdus. Est igitur ex necessitate aliqua natura, quae sic est alicui vel aliquibus superior, et nulla sit cui ordinetur inferior. Haec vero natura quae talis est, aut sola est, aut plures hujusmodi et aequales sunt: verum si plures sunt et aequales, cum aequales esse non possint, per diversa quaedam, sed per idem aliquid, illud unum, per quod aequaliter tam magnae sunt, aut est idipsum quod ipsae sunt, id est, ipsa rerum essentia, aut aliud quam quod ipsae sunt. Sed si nihil est aliud quam ipsa earum essentia, sicut earum essentiae non sunt plures, sed una; ita et naturae non sunt plures, sed una. Idem namque naturam hic intelligo, quod essentiam. Si vero id, per quod plures ipsae naturae tam magnae sunt, aliud est quam quod ipsae sunt, pro certo minores sunt, quam id per quod magnae sunt. Quidquid enim per aliud est magnum, minus est quam id per quod est magnum. Quare non sunt sic magnae, ut illis nihil aliud sit majus. Quod si nec per hoc quod sunt, nec per aliud possibile est tales esse plures naturas, quibus nihil sit praestantius; nullo modo possunt esse naturae plures hujusmodi. Restat igitur unam et solam naturam aliquam esse, quae sic est aliis superior, ut nulli sit inferior; sed quod tale est, maximum et optimum est omnium quae sunt. Est igitur quaedam natura, quae est summum omnium quae sunt. Hoc autem esse non potest, nisi ipsa sit per se id quod est; et cuncta quae sunt, sint per ipsam id quod sunt. Nam cum paulo ante ratio docuerit id quod per se est, et per quod alia cuncta sunt, esse summum omnium existentium; aut e converso id quod est summum, est per se, et cuncta alia per illud; aut erunt plura summa. Sed plura summa non esse manifestum est. Quare est quaedam natura, vel substantia, vel essentia, quae est per se bona et magna, et per se est id quod est, et per quam est quidquid vere aut bonum, aut magnum, aut aliquid est, et quae est summum bonum, summum magnum, summum ens sive subsistens, id est, summum omnium quae sunt." (Monologium, Cap. IV.)

of the first must not be infected by the relative being of the second, and the relative being of the second must not be infected by the absolute being of the first. Being must be both absolute and relative, so that the creatures of God may both be wholly within Him and yet to some extent without Him. If one demand is insisted on to the exclusion of the other, then either you get pure identity between God and His creatures, or else the identity is prejudiced to such an extent that God cannot be regarded as the creator of His creatures. The first argument gives the identity of appearance and reality; the second gives the difference, and neither without the other is of any use.

But unless these arguments are related at the beginning, they cannot be held together at the end. The relation of appearance and reality is that of difference in identity, not of difference plus identity. It is not a matter of first finding an abstract identity, then an abstract difference, and then adding them together. Identity and difference which are obtained independently will not complement each other. If they have any bearing on each other at all, they will destroy each other. In order that difference may be asserted with an identity, difference must be asserted in the very assertion of the identity. The identity is such that the difference would not/

not be what it is if the identity were not what it is. But this can be obtained only when a judgment is asserted within a context, that is, when the reality to which an appearance is referred is not its only reality, but one of a number of realities which together appear. It is because the oar which is bent in water is the identical oar which is straight out of water that there is a difference between its straightness out of water, and its bentness in water. But it is because the real oar is not an isolated thing but functions along with other things, that you can get identity in difference between the real oar and the apparent oar which complement each other and do not destroy each other. It is, notably, because of the behaviour of light waves that the oar can be both straight and bent, and bent because it is straight, and straight because it is bent. But when you are engaged in proving a unique reality, you are forced to obtain the difference in identity of reality and appearance separately, and then the difference and the identity will fall apart so that the reality destroys itself.

In the first argument you advance from appearances to their unique reality by postulating the complete dependence of any appearance on something beyond it, and then arguing that as this dependence is common to every appearance, therefore it is a dependence of all appearances on one reality. Thus you get to/

to God on this argument by assuming that, as they are derivative, all the things of this world equally are, or rather equally are not. Difference of being in this argument is not a difference already present between the various terms of the premises, but a difference that holds only between the terms of the premises taken as a whole and the conclusion. It is a result of the demonstration of the complete dependence of the things of this world on God. So far as the things of this world are differently, so far their dependence on God is incomplete, for, then, the whole of their being will not be taken up into God, but only the part which is common to them. This argument, then, depends on the absolute identity of the being of the things of this world, and it is destroyed by any differences of their being.

But differences between the being of things is the initial postulate of the second argument. It argues that as there are differences of being among things, and as these different beings cannot form an endless series, therefore God must be admitted as that which is in the greatest degree (1). And thus the second argument must either destroy the first or be abandoned in favour of the first. It is impossible to have it/

(1) It is unnecessary to attack the second assumption which this argument has in common with Thomas'. Unless a final term of a series of degrees of being is assumed in its very definition, it seems impossible ever to demonstrate it. But that point need not be laboured here. All that we are concerned with here is the consistency of the two arguments and not the validity of either taken separately.

it both ways. God cannot be both the limit of an ascending series of different beings, and also that on which each and every member of the series, and thus the whole series, depends. In order to identify the conclusions reached in the two arguments, it will be necessary to say that God, as the only independent on which everything depends, is also God as that which is to the greatest extent, because degrees of independence are degrees of being, since being varies inversely with dependence. And then, in order to assert difference of being between God and His creatures, you will have to prove the dependence of the creatures on God. Then either of two conclusions will follow: Either you can deny differences of being among the things of this world so that you can re-assert the first argument, or you can assert the differences of being among the things of this world, so that you can re-assert the second argument. But it is impossible to assert both arguments together, since it is impossible to say that the things of this world are dependent only on God and, at the same time, that there are differences of being among the things of this world; since if God, as the only independent, is also to be regarded as that which is to the greatest extent, differences of being must be regarded as differences of independence.

Either the difference of being postulated in the second argument goes so deeply into the nature of things that the/

the first argument fails to hold through the destruction of the being common to all of them, or, if that is not so, the second argument is simply a re-statement of the first. It pre-supposes things to be divided into those which are through another and therefore inferior, and that which is through itself and therefore superior, and it then simply re-asserts the existence of something which is inferior to nothing, on the ground of the existence of something which alone is through itself. In the case of Anselm, it is the second alternative that is chosen. The first argument is pushed home and the second argument is abandoned. And in this Anselm is typical of the whole Scholastic period which begins with him. Here, at the very beginning, the same position is reached that is afterwards reached at the very end in Spinoza (1). We are thus back at the position reached in Paragraph 4. The attempt to obtain a difference between appearance and reality has failed, as it must always fail whenever an absolute reality is in question. If you insist on the absoluteness of your reality, you must deny that it is distinguishable from appearance and thus you must deny that it is reality at all.

(1) Compare Monologium, Cap. XXVIII: "... ille solus creator spiritus est, et omnia creata, non sunt; nec tamen omnino non sunt, quia per illum qui solus absolute est, de nihilo aliquid facta sunt" and Ethices, Pars. I, Prop. 15: "Quidquid est in Deo est, et nihil sine Deo esse neque concipi potest."

7. The breakdown of Anselm's cosmological proof follows on the principles that have already been elucidated, but the actual point at which the breakdown occurs reveals a development of these principles which is worth considering in detail.

Spinoza's dictum: 'All negation is determination' is only half the truth. Negation is determination, because judgment in general is determination; because affirmation, too, is determination. In passing from affirmation to negation, you are not passing from indeterminateness to determinateness (the limitation of indeterminateness). If you were, no passage from affirmation to negation would be possible, since determinateness can be obtained only from determinateness. The transition from affirmation to negation is possible because all judgment asserts difference as well as identity. It is possible because subject and predicate are both held together and held apart by the copula. If this second factor in the copula is overlooked so that judgment is regarded as pure identification, then negation must be regarded as an absurdity, since it denies identification (though always on some basis of identity).

The theory of negative judgment is thus a critical point with any logic, not because negation introduces any new factors into judgment, but because it makes prominent those factors which in affirmation tend to be obscured. The ability to/

to account for negative judgment is a test of the extent to which affirmative judgment has really been accounted for. Thus it is that Anselm's difficulties with his cosmological argument centre round the position to be assigned to not-being (1). In considering affirmation, he has been exclusively concerned with the identity (being) that it asserts, and hence when he attempts to get difference (not-being) out of it, he is lost. The dependence which Anselm has obtained for all appearances on the absolute reality is absolute. The relation 'through', with which he is working, is not the correlative of any other relation or relations of dependence - 'from', 'by', 'in'. It is rather the relation of dependence which contains all relations of dependence. Hence it follows (2) that, just as all things which are, are through the supreme nature, and that alone is through itself, so all things are from that nature, and that alone is from itself. And hence, again, (3) it follows that it is in all things as well as through all things, and that it is that in which all things are, as well as that through which all things are. And so finally (4) it follows that it becomes all things.

(1) Monologium, Cap. VI, XII, XIII and XIX.

(2) Ibid, Cap. V.

(3) Ibid, Cap. XIV.

(4) Ibid, Cap. XXV, quoted in footnote to previous paragraph.

But this development does not go forward without some opposition from Anselm. He finds himself unable to acquiesce in this disappearance of all other relations in the relation 'through', even though that disappearance is necessitated by the position assigned to 'through' in his original proof. Thus (1) he attempts, on the basis of the second argument, to check the development of the first argument towards Spinozism, and he therefore denies the result that he has reached immediately before (2). Those things which are through the highest nature, he argues, cannot be from it, since then the highest nature will be the matter (materia) of things, and so it will be changed by increase or decrease as the things which are through it come to be, or pass away. But it cannot be supposed that the highest nature is subject to change, and still less, if that be possible, can it be supposed, as this suggestion would imply, that it changes it self. Thus, therefore, those things which are through the highest nature are not from it (3).

- (1) Monologium, Cap. VII. (2) Ibid. Cap. V.

(3) At si ex summae naturae materia potest esse aliquid minus ipsa, summum bonum mutari et corrumpi potest: quod nefas est dicere. Quapropter, quoniam omne quod aliud est quam ipsa, minus est ipsa; impossibile est aliquid hoc modo esse ex ipsa. Amplius: dubium non est quia nullatenus est bonum, per quod mutatur vel corrumpitur summum bonum. Quod si qua minor natura est ex summi boni materia, cum nihil sit undecunque nisi per summam essentiam, mutatur et corrumpitur summum bonum per ipsam: quare summa essentia, quae est ipsum summum bonum, nullatenus est bonum; quod est inconveniens. Nulla igitur minor natura materialiter est ex summa natura. (Ibid, Cap. VII). /e

But if not from the highest nature, from what are they? They cannot be from themselves, since nothing is from itself.. And even if they could be and were, they would then be through themselves, which is false. But there is nothing beyond the highest nature and those things which are through the highest nature. They must therefore be from nothing, since everything is either from something or from nothing (1).

This argument is necessitated at all points by the purpose Anselm has in hand. He cannot allow that the relation 'through', by which he has advanced from appearances to the absolute reality, is merely one relation of dependence among others, since that would leave his absolute reality less than absolute. He cannot, in particular, regard it as accounting merely for the "form" of things, leaving the "matter" out of account, since that would lead to two absolutes - absolute matter from which all things are, and absolute form through which/

(1) Cum igitur eorum essentiam, quae per aliud sunt, constet non esse velut ex materia, ex summa essentia, nec ex se, nec ex alio, manifestum est quia ex nulla materia est. Quare, quoniam quidquid est per summam essentiam est, nec per ipsam aliquid aliud esse potest nisi ea aut faciente aut materia existente, consequitur de necessitate, ut praeter eam nihil sit, nisi ea faciente, et quoniam nihil aliud est vel fuit, nisi illa, et quae facta sunt ab illa, nihil omnino facere potuit per aliud, vel instrumentum, vel adjumentum, quam per seipsam. At omne quod fecit, sine dubio aut fecit ex aliquo, velut ex materia; aut ex nihilo. Quoniam igitur certissime patet quia essentia omnium, quae praeter summam essentiam sunt, ab eadem summa essentia facta est, et quia ex nulla materia est; procul dubio nihil apertius quam quia multitudinem, tam formose formatam, tam ordinate variatam, tam convenienter diversam, sola per seipsam produxit ex nihilo. (Ibid.)

which all things are. Thus he must somehow dispose of the correlative concepts of form and matter in order that he may assert the absolute concept of creation. The relation 'through' with which he is working must, then, be regarded as accounting for very much more than the formal element of things. But yet it cannot be regarded as accounting for the form plus the matter, since that leads towards the absolute identification of the absolute reality and its appearances, which, as he here sees, is fatal, but which, as has been noted, he is afterwards driven to assert.

What then, is he to do with 'from' as representing the concept of matter (correlative of form), which he is trying to dispose of? He cannot deny that it has some validity - he recognises, for example, that it is useful and necessary to regard all things as from the four elements (1). He cannot refer it back to the derivative things themselves, so that they may be their own matter, since that would give them a degree of self/

(1) Non autem dubito omnem hanc mundi molem, cum partibus suis, sicut videmus, formatam constare ex terra et aqua et aere et igne: quae, scilicet, quatuor elementa, aliquo modo intelligi possunt sine his formis quas conspiciamus in rebus formatis, ut eorum informis corporum suis formis discretorum; non inquam, hoc dubito; sed quaero, unde haec ipsa, quam dixi, mundanae molis materia sit. Nam si hujus materiae est aliqua materia, illa verius est corporeae universitatis materia. (Ibid.)

Aut etiam confusa natura videtur esse materia omnium

self-subsistence which would prejudice the absoluteness of the highest nature. He is then driven to attempt to make this relation 'from' innocuous by referring it to Nothing. Matter is Nothing.

But this solution, he finds, (1) is no solution. If something is from Nothing, Nothing itself was the cause of that which is 'from' it. But how does that which has no being help to bring anything into being? And if Nothing cannot be the condition of anything, how is something effected by Nothing? Again, Nothing either is something or it is not, but if it is, then, whatever is from Nothing is from something. And if it is not, then, only Nothing is from it, and thus it would follow that the Nothing from which the things of this world ^{are,} must be something, and thus the whole of the preceding argument is overthrown (2).

In/

(1) Ibid, Cap. VIII.

(2) Sed occurit quaedam dubitatio de nihilo. Nam ex quocunque fit aliquid, id causa est ejus quod ex se fit, et omnis causa necesse est aliquid ad essentiam effecti praebeat adjumentum. Quod sic omnes tenent experimento, ut etiam nulli rapiatur contendendo, et vix ulli subripiatur decipiendo. Si ergo factum est ex nihilo aliquid, ipsum nihil fuit causa ejus, quod ex ipso factum est. Sed quomodo id quod nullum habebat esse, adjuvit aliquid ut perveniret ad esse? ^{aut} Si autem nullum adjumentum de nihilo provenit ad aliquid, cui ^{aut} qualiter persuadeatur quia ex nihilo aliquid efficiatur? Praeterea, nihil aut significat aliquid, aut non significat aliquid. Sed si nihil est aliquid, quaecunque facta sunt ex nihilo, facta sunt/

In order to escape these difficulties, Anselm interprets the proposition: 'Those things which are through the highest nature are from Nothing', as, 'Those things which are through the highest nature are not from anything'. (1)

But this is just what he cannot do. This second formula, so far from being a re-formulation of the first, is a completely new one which either contradicts the first, or goes back to the position from which the first was developed:

In this re-formation either 'anything' includes Nothing, or it does not. If it does, then, among other things, it asserts that those things which are through the highest nature are not from Nothing. If it does not, then all that it asserts is that those things which are through the highest nature are neither from themselves nor from the highest nature. And it was/

sunt ex aliquo. Si vero nihil non est aliquid: quoniam intelligi non potest ut ex eo quod penitus non est, fiat aliquid, nihil fit ex nihilo; sicut vox omnium est quia nihil de nihilo. Unde videtur consequi ut quidquid fit, fiat ex aliquo: aut enim fit de aliquo, aut de nihilo. Sive igitur nihil sit aliquid, sive nihil non sit aliquid; consequi videtur ut quidquid factum est, factum sit ex aliquo. (Ibid. Cap.VIII).

(2) Tertia interpretatio, qua dicitur aliquid esse factum de nihilo, est cum intelligimus esse quidem factum, sed non esse aliquid, unde sit factum. Per similem significationem dici videtur, cum homo contristatus sine causa, dicitur contristatus de nihilo. Secundum igitur haec sensum si intelligatur, quod supra conclusum est, quia praeter summam essentiam cuncta, quae sunt ab eadem, ex nihilo facta sunt, id est, non ex aliquo: sicut ipsa conclusio praecedentia convenienter consequetur, ita ex eadem conclusione nihil inconueniens subsequetur. (Ibid.)

was from this statement that the problem that the problem of the disposal of 'from' arose. Either, then, the new formula contradicts the old, or it re-states the old problem.

But it is not only in relation to the previous development of the argument that the equivocal position of Nothing leads to difficulties. Whether or not account is taken of the consistency of the argument, the postulation of Nothing raises difficulties which will prevent the disposal of 'from' by reference to it. The root of the trouble is that Nothing must both be and not be, and this, on Anselm's premises, is impossible. Nothing is more than mere absence, but it is less than the absolute reality and its appearances. It is thus impossible to regard Nothing along with the absolute reality and its appearances as 'being', and it is equally impossible to distinguish it from them as 'not being'. And hence it is impossible to obtain the perfectly general term - 'anything' since it is impossible to determine the relation of Nothing to it. Nothing can neither be included in nor excluded from 'anything'.

In order to obtain the term 'anything' you must then deny Nothing. You must assert that the absolute reality and its appearances are all that there is. It is only then that you can get the general denial that appearances are from 'anything' on the ground that they are neither from themselves nor from/

from the absolute reality, and 'anything' precisely denotes the absolute reality and its appearances. But if you recognise Nothing outside the absolute reality and its appearances, you cannot assert that the appearances are not from anything.

But "is not anything" implies "is something else". In spite of any attempts to make "is" absolute, it will turn round in your hands and become relative. And this necessitates the re-emergence of Nothing in face of all denials. Affirmation and negation are correlatives. This does not mean that negation must be based on affirmation in the sense that affirmation is self-subsistent, while negation is not. The justification is mutual. Just as negation is to some extent self-subsistent, but is further justified by affirmation, so affirmation is to some extent self-subsistent and is further justified by negation. The real point is that when any predicate is denied of any subject, it may be legitimately asked: What then can be asserted of the subject? The table is not square: what then is its shape? Similarly, in the case where a relation and not a simple attribute is concerned. This ring is not made of gold: what then is it made of? Thus: Appearances are not from anything: what then are they from? And the only possible answer is, Nothing.

Negation always pre-supposes a set of alternatives so that if one of the alternatives is denied, it is assumed that the/

the other may take its place. Thus, in attempting to get rid of the correlatives of form and matter, Anselm has introduced the correlatives of being and not-being. The root of not-being is to be found in his first argument for God. There, it was argued that since anything is what it is through something else, therefore the being of appearances pre-supposes an absolute being through which they are what they are. But in precisely similar fashion it may be argued that anything is not, what it is not, through something else, and therefore the not-being of appearances (what they lack) pre-supposes an absolute not-being through which they are not what they are not. Thus Nothing is with as much right, and indeed with the same right, as God Himself. It is impossible, then, to get rid of Nothing. The necessity of its emergence is rooted in the very nature of the attempt to establish an absolute reality.

It may be objected that although we always assume that there is an affirmation correlative to any negation, yet such a correlative may not be logically demanded. There is no need to go from 'appearances are not from anything' to 'appearances are from Nothing', because that would imply that we did recognise that appearances are from something, and that, in fact, we have denied. The assertion that appearances are not from anything is really a denial of the relation 'from' altogether./

altogether. It might be put: 'From' in relation to appearances, is not. And then to ask in the face of this assertion: What then are appearances from? is a question which cannot legitimately be put. It certainly cannot be answered. But that is no proof that the assertion is unjustifiable. It is rather an indication that the question is absurd, since while it pretends to proceed on the basis of the assertion, it really proceeds on the basis of the denial of the assertion.

It may be agreed that if the formula, 'Appearances are not from anything' cannot be re-formulated as, 'From in relation to appearances is not', then the emergence of Nothing is not necessitated. But this re-formulation is not possible. It would mean that the relation 'from' must altogether in every sense be denied of appearances. And it is impossible to abolish terms in this way. You will then be affirming that they are mere words - vocal sound or inked colour. Terms may not be what they pretend to be, but even their unjustified pretension must connect itself at some point with what is, and thus they will themselves obtain some sort of covering of being. The absolute denial of 'from' that would save Anselm from Nothing, is not open to him. In recognising that in some sense, however slight, the appearances of the absolute reality are from the four elements, he has made it impossible to assert that/

that 'from' altogether is not. And the recognition that appearances are in some sense 'from' is a recognition that he is forced to. Thus, any absolute denial of 'from' is impossible. All denial is relative and hence the demand for an affirmation correlative to any negation is justified. And since this is so, Nothing must arise as that from which the appearances of the absolute reality are, and it cannot subsequently be got rid of.

Thus Anselm's attempt to obtain the transcendence of his absolute reality splits on Nothing. If he will not regard appearances as being from the absolute reality as well as through it, then he must regard them as being from Nothing. But the Nothing from which they are, must be a Nothing which is something, and thus he will have admitted something beside the absolute reality and its appearances, so that the absolute reality will cease to be the unique reality of appearances, and hence will cease to be absolute. It follows, then, that it is impossible for an absolute reality to transcend its appearances. Such reality as the appearances have, and that is the whole of the appearances, is the reality which they have in the absolute reality, and that is the reality of the absolute reality. And this is the conclusion to which Anselm himself is ultimately driven. The appearances, then, are the absolutely reality, and conversely, the absolute reality is the appearances, and nothing but the appearances. The distinction between appearances and reality/

reality has vanished and you are left with a reality which is simply identical with the appearances.

The difference between the absolute reality and its appearances which is provided by the second argument, cannot assert itself against the identity which is the aim of the first argument, and therefore the cosmological proof, which consists of the one and the other, utterly destroys itself. Thus the considerations advanced against any cosmological argument on the basis of the nature of the concepts of appearance and reality have been vindicated in the development of Anselm's cosmological argument, which is of the form that any cosmological argument must take, if the reality to be obtained from it is absolute.

8. "Postquam opusculum quoddam (Monologion), velut exemplum meditandi de ratione fidei, cogentibus me precibus quorundam fratrum, in persona alicujus tacite secum ratiocinando quae nesciat investigantis edidi: considerans illud esse multorum concatenatione contextum argumentorum, coepi mecum quaerere si forte posset inveniri unum argumentum, quod nullo alio ad se probandum, quam se solo indigeret; et solum ad astruendum quia Deus vere est, et quia est summum bonum nullo alio indigens, et quo omnia indigent ut sint et bene sint; et quaecunque credimus de divina substantia, sufficeret." (Anselm, Proslogion, Prooemium).

The criticism that has been passed on the concept of an absolute reality has all along been based on the supposition that that concept is asserted in judgment. Pre-supposing/

supposing this, it has been argued that judgment is unequal to the assertion of an absolute reality, since judgment is the assertion of identity in difference, whereas the appearances of an absolute reality cannot be different from it, since, if they were, the absolute reality would not be the only reality of its appearances and would not therefore be absolute. This criticism is open to attack in two directions:-

- i. On the ground that an absolute reality may be without being able to be asserted to be.
- ii. On the ground that judgment is not co-extensive with knowledge.

The first of these objections may be soon disposed of. The second introduces the ontological argument whose consideration will occupy the remainder of this essay.

i. What is, is independently of its being known to be, and thus it is impossible to deny an absolute reality merely on the ground that it cannot be asserted to be. Even if it cannot be asserted to be, nevertheless it still may be (1).

This objection supposes that the reality of an appearance is merely another fact beside and beyond the appearance. But this is not so. The reality of an appearance is what/

(1) This objection would probably be supported by a theory of the limitation of human knowledge on the ground (in the last resort) that men are minds in bodies. But it is unnecessary to state any such justification for this objection. It is complete as it stands and is probably far more cogent without the help of a theory of knowledge.

what stands in a certain relation to the appearance - it is what accounts for the appearance. Thus the possibility of an absolute reality does not rest merely on the possibility of there being other facts beyond the facts that we know, but on the possibility of the facts that we know being accounted for by a unique reality. And this, it has been seen, is impossible. Doubtless there are many things of which men collectively, as well as individually, are ignorant. But such a general ignorance of things does not justify the assertion that any determinate thing is possible, if the demands of that thing in relation to other things cannot be met.

ii. The first objection to the denial of the absolute, on the ground that judgment is inadequate to its assertion, denies that the impossibility of knowing anything implies its actual impossibility. The second objection allows that the impossibility of knowing anything implies its actual impossibility but denies that judgment is co-extensive with knowledge. It will allow that the criticism that has been passed on the concept of an absolute reality is valid so far as the absolute reality has been asserted in judgment. But it will not allow that that criticism is final, since it denies that judgment is final. It affirms that the inconsistencies in the concept of the absolute reality that we frame through judgment may be overcome when we pass beyond judgment. The concept of an absolute reality/

reality, it says, has been found untenable because it has been approached from something other than itself. - because the only proof of it that has been considered is the cosmological proof. Now this impossibility of advancing from anything outside the absolute reality to the absolute reality may be granted. But that does not show that it is impossible to obtain an absolute reality. The cosmological argument is not the only road to God. Beyond it is the ontological argument, which, in avoiding the transition from appearance to reality, advances beyond judgment and hence eludes the contradiction which the cosmological argument is bound to assert - that appearances both are and are not the absolute reality.

The ontological argument does not advance from something outside the absolute reality to the absolute reality, but nevertheless it does advance. It is an advance within the absolute reality and it is a development of the absolute reality. Thus, although no other term than the absolute reality itself is involved, that is not to say that at the end we are left exactly where we were at the beginning. It is true that we start with the absolute reality in order to reach it, but the reality which we reach is not the reality with which we began. We are not dealing with the static circumscribed terms of formal logic which remain fixed in petrified immobility.

And again, we have passed beyond the sphere of judgment where/

where any concretion of a term can appear only as an addition to it, so that it is distinguished from it even while it is identified with it. In the ontological argument the absolute reality that we reach at the end is more than the absolute reality that we had at the beginning, but that 'more' does not accrue to it through judgment. Of itself it develops itself, and it asserts its actuality even in the face of its denial. It asserts itself not through any force which it borrows from its context, but through the force which it contains in itself. "Tantum enim vim hujus probationis in se continet significatio; ut hoc ipsum quod dicatur, [i.e. quo majus cogitari non possit] ex necessitate, eo ipso quod intelligitur vel cogitatur, et revera probetur existere, et id ipsum esse quidquid de divina substantia oportet credere." (1)

The precarious foothold that we have in knowledge through judgment passes beyond itself if we carry it far enough. It is only so long as we, in knowing, are outside the object which is known, that our knowledge is bifurcated into subject and predicate, appearance and reality. The externality of subject and predicate is the externality of subject and object. But this externality of subject and object continues only as long as the subject is not equal to the object. As knowledge grows more and more adequate, the distinction/

(1) Anselm, Liber Apologeticus contra Gaunilonem, Cap. X.

distinction between subject and object grows more and more thin. And ultimately, when we have reached the point at which our knowledge is altogether adequate, when we have grasped reality as absolute, then it breaks down - subject passes into object, and therefore into predicate. It is when subject passes into object, so that judgment negates itself, that we reach the absolute reality, and it is this very passage from the absolute reality into the absolute reality that alone can constitute the proof of the absolute reality (1).

9. The absolute is the self-sufficient, and the self-sufficient can be shown to be only through itself. Since it is not through anything else, it cannot be shown to be through anything else: since it is through itself, it can and must of itself assert itself. The ontological argument is thus not one of a number of possible proofs of the existence of the absolute. It /

(1) This statement of the purpose of the ontological argument goes far beyond anything Anselm contemplated, in introducing it in terms of the Hegelian logic. (See, for example, The Logic of Hegel (trans. Wallace) pp. 329-334; Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God in Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion (trans. Speirs and Sanderson) Vol. 3). But I do not think that Anselm's account is thereby falsified, since, I believe, Hegel's statement of Anselm's argument is the statement Anselm himself would have had to give of it if he had still maintained it in the nineteenth century. That, at any rate, is what is being maintained here.

It is the proof of the absolute, and hence it is more than a proof of the absolute. It is not an argument whose failure leaves the possibility of an absolute where it was before. It is an argument whose success or failure immediately and directly decides whether or not there is an absolute. It is a crucial experiment. If an absolute really is, it must be known to be through itself: if it cannot be known to be through itself, then it is not. (1). Thus a grounded belief in the absolute is not compatible with a rejection of the ontological argument.

It may be objected to this that while an absolute reality must be self-sufficient, yet it does not therefore follow that its existence can be proved only through its self-sufficiency. We may know that it is, without knowing in detail what it is, so that we cannot prove that it is through what it is. Thus, it may be said that the belief in an absolute reality is not incompatible with a rejection of the ontological argument. The fact that we cannot argue to an absolute reality on the basis of its self-sufficiency does not tell against its existence, but rather against our limited human faculties. Nor, in rejecting the ontological argument, are we bound to reject any other argument for an absolute reality, since, again, we can know that a thing is without knowing completely what it is.

There/



(1) "Id quod in se est" necessarily is, "id quod per se concipitur". Spinoza's definition is tautologous.

There are two variants of this position which are historically important: that of Thomas and that of Kant. They agree in regarding the ontological argument as sound in principle, but yet as beyond the reach of man, and their grounds for this are identical - the restriction of human knowledge to the objects of the senses. But they disagree in the alternative which they propose to the ontological argument. For Thomas the alternative is a cosmological argument: for Kant it is the demand of morality for the moral government of the world. But in both cases the admission of an alternative to the ontological argument is incompatible with the attitude that is adopted towards the ontological argument. In the case of Thomas the assertion of the alternative is incompatible with the rejection, for human knowledge, of the ontological argument. In the case of Kant, the assertion of the alternative is incompatible with the assertion in principle (as an ideal) of the ontological argument. And one or other of these conflicts is bound to occur whenever an absolute reality is asserted along with a denial of its assertion through its absoluteness. Either the absolute reality or the denial of its assertion through its absoluteness must go. If the absolute is held to, then the argument for it, that is asserted as an alternative to the ontological argument, will itself turn out to be an ontological argument. If, on the other hand, what is asserted as an alternative to the ontological argument really is an alternative,

then, it will not be an absolute reality that is arrived at by its means.

(a) Thomas: In God, being and essence are identical, since He is necessarily through Himself (1) and He is His own essence (2). Therefore God Himself is His being, and thus that He is, is known per se simpliciter. But it does not therefore follow that He can be so known quoad nos, since we cannot conceive what He is. Thus, for example, although it is known per se simpliciter that any whole is greater than its part, yet to him who does not conceive the meaning of 'whole', it must be unknown. Similarly, in relation to the most evident (notissima) things, our understanding is as the sun to the owl (3). A thing is known to the extent that its substance is comprehended. Thus if the human intellect comprehends the substance of anything (for example, a stone or a triangle), nothing that may be understood of that thing escapes the faculty of human reason. But this is not the case with God. The human understanding cannot attain to a comprehension of the substance of God by its own power, since in this life thought arises from sense, and so those things which do not occur in sense/

- (1) Summa contra Gentiles, Lib.I, Cap.XXII;
Summa Theologica, Quaest. III, Art. 4.
- (2) Summa contra Gentiles, Lib.I, Cap.XXI;
Summa Theologica, Quaest. III, Art. 3.
- (3) Summa contra Gentiles, Lib.I, Cap.XI;
Summa Theologica, Quaest. II, Art. 1.

sense cannot be comprehended by human understanding, except in so far as thought of them may be inferred from the senses. But sensibles cannot lead our understanding to see in them what the divine substance is, since they are effects unequal to the power of their cause. Nevertheless, our understanding is led from sensibles to the divine knowledge, so that it knows of God that He is, and other things which must be attributed to the first principle (1).

The cogency of Thomas' attempt to differentiate the ontological argument, which he believes himself unable to assert, from the cosmological argument, which he does assert, depends on his ability to differentiate the effects of God from the substance of God. It is because God is to some extent in His effects, but yet not completely, that he can regard the consideration of God's effects as both affording the knowledge that He is, and at the same time denying the knowledge of what He is. But it is impossible to draw any sharp and final distinction between the effects of God and God Himself. If there is any distinction at all, it must be merely provisional and temporary, and no argument from the effects of God to God is/

(1) Summa contra Gentiles, Lib. I, Cap. III. This is treated in greater detail in the Summa Theologica (Quaest. XII), where the sharp conclusions of the Summa contra Gentiles are somewhat softened by the use of a number of distinctions. But the outcome is identical - see particularly Art. 11.

is complete until it has been overcome. Thus, when the argument from the effects of God is pushed home, it is bound to become an ontological argument, since it is only when the effects of God are realised as God Himself that God can be regarded as absolute.

i. The sensibles, which are regarded as the effects of God, can be regarded as His effects only to the extent that there is such knowledge of Him as will enable us to assert Him as their cause. In order that we may argue from effects, we must have gone beyond effects. We cannot even say that anything is an effect unless we have demonstrated its continuity with something else which we may therefore regard as its cause. And the continuity which we must assert between one fact and another fact, in order that one may be regarded as the cause of the other, is not a bare contiguity. The continuity of cause and effect can be asserted only on the basis of content. Thus in arguing to God from movement, He can be regarded as the First Cause only in being regarded as the Unmoved Mover. An argument from effects, then, must be regarded as also an argument from substance, since the search for a cause is a search for what can bring about the effect.

ii. But in the case of the First Cause, this continuity between cause and effect reduces to identity, since there is nothing/

nothing outside the First Cause which can hold its effects away from it. The First Cause of itself completely accounts for its effects; it must be at the same time final, formal, material and efficient cause of all things. Therefore the effects of the First Cause cannot be other than the First Cause.

Since God is that which is necessarily through Himself, and therefore His essence and His existence are the same (1), it follows that He cannot be except in His essence. There can be no accident in God, since God is existence itself, and existence cannot participate in anything (2). But if God had effects unequal to Him, He would be without His essence, since these effects would involve His existence, but not His essence. These effects would be accidental to Him, since they would presuppose something beyond Him, through which they were added to Him. But this is impossible, and therefore God cannot have effects unequal to their cause.

Either God has no effects, or these effects are nothing but His essence. And thus either the cosmological argument, which is asserted as an alternative to the ontological, fails altogether, or it reduces to the ontological argument.

(1) Summa contra Gentiles, Lib. I, Cap. XXII.
Summa Theologica, Quaest. III, Art. 4.

(2) Summa contra Gentiles, Lib. I, Cap. XXIII.
Summa Theologica, Quaest. III, Art. 6.

(b) Kant. The concept of God in the first instance is the idea of a necessary being which is the basis of contingent being, and the proof of the existence of the object of this concept consists in the attempt to specify it. This can be done only through its identification with the ideal of the completely conditioned, which, being the synthesis of all possible conditions, is incapable of any condition. Thus, any theoretical proof of the existence of God reduces to an identification of the idea of necessary existence with the ideal of the completely conditioned. And so the ontological argument, which seeks to prove that the completely conditioned necessarily exists (though it reverses the natural order of reason), is the basis of both the other arguments which speculative reason uses to prove the existence of God - the cosmological and the physico-theological.

But the ontological argument breaks down because the concepts which are used in it, are not objective constitutive principles of reason, but subjunctive regulative principles of reason. They do not form concepts of objects, but merely arrange the objects which the understanding has received through sensibility, and so they can be used only immanently and not transcendently. And this shows itself to be the case in the fact that, while speculative reason is obliged to think that something exists necessarily, it cannot think that anything exists/

exists necessarily.

Since, then, the concepts of reason may be used only immanently, it follows that all synthetic knowledge a priori is impossible outside the confirmation of possible experience. But the synthesis of the ontological argument cannot be confirmed by experience, since only the contingent and the conditioned are found there, while it is dealing with the necessary and the completely real. Thus the ontological argument fails, and its failure involves the failure of the other speculative proofs of the existence of God.

But although the ontological argument fails, and with it the other speculative proofs of the existence of God, it does not therefore follow that God does not exist. Rather the very fact that it is impossible to prove the existence of God theoretically shows that it is equally impossible to disprove His existence theoretically. The failure of speculative reason to prove God's existence is rooted in the restriction of human experience, and this restriction makes it as impossible to deny, as to assert, God.

Thus, in spite of the failure of the ontological argument to prove the necessary existence of the completely real, that still remains flawless as an ideal, which may be otherwise proved to exist, not by reason used speculatively, but/

but by reason used practically. In practice we are in touch with noumena, since we ourselves are noumena, whereas in theory we are in touch only with phenomena. And thus the demands of practical reason come in to supplement the possibility of the ideal of speculative reason. Hence, despite the failure of the ontological argument, the object of that argument must be attained since the moral law demands a moral government of the world, and the demands of the moral law must be satisfied (1).

On the one hand, then, the failure of speculative reason to carry through the ontological argument, owing to the restriction of human knowledge, leaves us with the concept of God as a flawless ideal which we must both assert and deny. On the other hand, the demands of practical reason, which, unlike those of speculative reason, must be completely satisfied, force us to regard this ideal as actual. But the realisation of the existence of God which we obtain in practice, does not react on our knowledge of His existence which we seek to obtain in theory. Even while we know through practical reason that God must be, He still remains an unrealisable ideal for speculative reason.

There is a gap between speculative and practical reason which/

(1) Critique of Pure Reason: Transcendental Dialectic, Book II, Chap. III (The Ideal of Pure Reason).

Critique of Practical Reason: Part First, Book II, (Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason).

which neither can occupy, since in doing so it would encroach on the other. And so there is a gap between our knowledge of God as an ideal and our postulation of God as an actuality, which can never be filled in. Kant must assert this gap, if he is both to deny the cogency of the ontological argument and yet, at the same time, to assert the existence of God. If the argument from morality is to be a genuine alternative to the ontological argument, a rigid distinction must be drawn between practical and speculative reason, since otherwise what is asserted as an alternative to the ontological argument will turn out, as it did in the case of Thomas, to be merely subsidiary to the ontological argument. Failing a gap between practical and speculative reason, the existence of God which we assert in practical reason would have to be shown as continuous with the ideal of God which we assert in speculative reason. And, then, the restriction of knowledge which made it possible for Kant to circumvent the ontological argument, would have to be denied. The argument from morality would not then be a substantive argument; it would merely indicate how the ontological argument was to be completed.

It is, then, only by postulating a gap between speculative and practical reason that Kant can prevent the argument from morality from running into the ontological argument./

argument. But in differentiating them in this way, he still fails to present the argument from morality as an alternative to the ontological argument. The first is different from the second, but it is different because what it attempts to prove is different. The demand of morality is not the ideal of knowledge. And so the argument from morality is not an alternative to the ontological argument.

Morality can demand the existence of God only because it is autonomous. But because it is autonomous, the God it demands cannot be the ideal of speculation. If morality is autonomous, then religion is heteronomous, and then the object of religion must be less than the ens realissimum which speculation requires. The demand of practical reason is a demand for an ally, but the ideal of speculative reason is an absolute reality which must repudiate the position of an ally.

If the demand of practical reason is to be a demand for the ideal of speculative reason, then morality must cease to be autonomous. The moral law must not be regarded as externally necessitating God, but as necessitating God because it is God. But then, if morality ceases to be autonomous, it will be unable to demand anything in its own right. The moral law will assert itself because God, in whom it is contained, asserts Himself. And thus the argument from morality will reduce/

reduce to an ontological argument.

Either, then, the argument from morality must be transformed into an ontological argument, or its object is not God, that is, an absolute reality. Pre-supposing a restriction in knowledge which makes it impossible to prove directly and immediately that God is through Himself, but yet holding that God is and that He is through Himself, one of two courses is open. Either it is assumed that that restriction may be overcome, so that we grasp the nature of God even in the appearances that filter through to us - and then the argument which is regarded as an alternative to the ontological argument becomes an ontological argument and can be properly stated and accepted only as such. This is the position that Thomas is committed to. Or, on the other hand, the restriction on knowledge is rigidly adhered to, so that the necessity of God is realised through something outside God, and the alternative to the ontological argument is a genuine alternative. In this case, God ceases to be through Himself. He is derivative and dependent on another. And then the ground of the rejection of the ontological argument is not the limitation of our knowledge, but the falsity of our concept of God. The ontological argument has been denied in principle, and not merely because of its attainability to us. And thus God as the absolute reality has been denied. This/

This is the position of Kant.

Thus the rejection of the ontological argument is not compatible with a belief in an absolute reality on any other ground. Either the ontological argument must be accepted or a grounded belief in an absolute reality must go.

10. The ontological argument is not, then, a mere tour de force or a gratuitous mystification. It is the only argument that can establish an absolute reality. And if philosophy is the search for an absolute reality, then it is, as Hegel holds, an argument which "recurs in every philosophy, even against its wish and without its knowledge" (1). An absolute reality can only be proved to be through itself, since if it recognises anything outside itself which can in its own right lead to it, it destroys itself..

In arguing to an absolute reality, you may premise nothing but its idea. And thus that idea must be presented immediately. It must not be necessitated by anything else, and if it is suggested by anything else, that must be regarded merely as a hole through which it appears. And then the idea must of itself dictate its own actuality. Since the idea of God is grounded in nothing outside itself, so it must realise itself through nothing but itself. Mediate inference must give way/

(1) The Logic of Hegel (trans. Wallace) p. 333.

way to immediate explication. The cosmological argument breaks down because it proceeds through judgment, and judgment works only within a system. Judgment transmits a force which it does not itself possess. Thus it is impossible through judgment to substantiate the existence of an absolute reality which in itself possesses all force.

Judgment states identity in and through difference. It mediates between appearance and reality. In order that an absolute reality may be reached, mediation must be abolished. Nothing may be left outside the absolute reality, and thus both an immediate apprehension of the idea of God, and an immediate actualisation of that idea are necessary. The idea may not be reached through judgment, nor may its existence be proved through judgment. Since the absolute reality is the self-sufficient, the argument that establishes the absolute must be self-sufficient. But no judgment is self-sufficient. Therefore the absolute reality may be established only through a form of knowledge which has transcended judgment.

The ontological argument is the proof of the absolute reality, because in it alone is the attempt made to substantiate this knowledge beyond judgment.

The question of the existence of an absolute reality is, then, the question of the existence of a kind of knowledge beyond judgment. And the validity of the ontological argument depends/

depends upon the validity of its pretension to substantiate the existence of such a knowledge by actually attaining it. The problem of the ontological argument is thus a logical problem. Does it proceed from the immediate apprehension of the idea of God to its immediate actualisation, as it pretends? Or is the idea obtained, and therefore actualised, through an unacknowledged mediation - through a suppressed reference to a content outside it? Is the ontological argument genuinely different from the cosmological argument, so that it escapes the difficulties attendant on a proof of an absolute reality through judgment, or is it not?

11. The cosmological argument has to be given up because, while in its premises it regards appearances as real enough to specify the absolute reality, in its conclusion it has to regard these premises as not real at all - as mere appearances and nothing else. Thus the ontological argument is proposed as a substitute because in it, it is claimed, there is no reference to appearances. The absolute reality is proved through itself alone, and consequently the contradictions which arise in any attempt to determine the status of appearances relative to the absolute reality do not arise.

The ontological argument fails because it cannot make good/

good this claim. It is impossible to prove an absolute reality except by reference to its appearances, and consequently the ontological argument falls into the same contradictions as the cosmological argument. The ontological argument does not proceed through the concept of the absolute reality alone. Both that concept and the proof of its existence pre-suppose the reality of other facts - appearances- and consequently the reality which is obtained from it cannot be an absolute reality, since it is not an unique reality.

The proof of any reality is the proof of its ability (along with other realities) to account for a given set of appearances. It is that which meets the demands of its appearances. If, then, you refuse to take account of these appearances, you do not merely evade the difficulties of your problem, you evade the problem itself. Thus the attempt of the ontological argument to prove an absolute reality through itself alone is impossible. It must somehow refer to the appearances which it pretends to account for. And it would never have seemed to have the slightest cogency unless it did.

The difference between the cosmological and the ontological arguments is not that the one refers its absolute reality to appearances, while the other does not. The difference is rather that the references in the two cases are different. And even so, the difference does not go very deep - it is a difference in stress and direction, and not in kind.

It/

It has been seen (Paragraph 5.) that an effective cosmological argument must contain two lines of approach from appearances to their absolute reality:-

- i. That which secures the absolute dependence of appearances on the absolute reality, and thus ends in the identification of appearances with absolute reality.
- ii. That which secures difference between appearances and the absolute reality by regarding the absolute reality as the final term of a series of values.

And it has also been seen (Paragraph 6.) that the cosmological argument fails because it attempts to consummate these two lines of approach independently, and yet to identify the conclusions which are reached through them. It attempts to obtain the identity in difference which holds between a reality and its appearances by obtaining identity and difference separately and then adding them together. And the result is that, instead of supplementing, they destroy each other.

Now the ontological argument seeks to avoid this difficulty by advancing from appearances to their absolute reality along only one line of approach (the value series), and then, to secure what was previously secured by the other approach, it attempts to prove, first that this absolute reality does exist among appearances, and secondly that it must necessarily exist.

The cosmological argument consisted of three steps:-

- i./

- i. An advance from appearances to that through which all appearances are, and which alone is through itself.
- ii. An advance from appearances to that which is greater than any appearances, and than which nothing at all is greater.
- iii. The identification of these two.

And the ontological argument, too, consists in three steps:-

- i. An advance from appearances to that than which a greater cannot be thought (or the supremely perfect).
- ii. The proof that that is.
- iii. The proof that it cannot be thought not to be.

12. i. The idea of God which is the premise of the ontological argument is presented by Anselm and Descartes as isolated and underived. Anselm argues that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is the meaning of the term 'God', and that even the fool who denies God must understand the meaning of the term and thus have the idea of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought'. Descartes summarily asserts that the idea of the supremely perfect is one of the ideas contained in the treasury of the mind.

Now it is no doubt necessary at the beginning of an enquiry to take terms to a certain extent on trust. And so Anselm and Descartes are in the first instance justified in regarding/

regarding 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' and the 'supremely perfect' as more than mere words. They are justified at least in regarding these words as having meaning, and this may no doubt be expressed by saying that those who hear these words have an idea of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' or of the 'supremely perfect'.

But although this procedure may be admitted as a temporary expedient to initiate a discussion, it may not be regarded as finally absolving these ideas without any closer scrutiny. When we have baldly affirmed the terms we are going to use in any discourse, we have not completed that discourse; we have not indeed properly started on it. To have an idea is not enough. We must examine that idea.

Now, any examination of an idea can proceed only by relating it to other ideas (1). It is regarded in its place among other ideas and it is justified by the extent to which it succeeds in filling that place. But an idea has its place among other ideas only because it has been constructed to fill that place. It fits in among other ideas because it has been prescribed by those ideas. Ideas do not float about before they are dragged down to their appropriate station. They occupy stations all along: they are what they are only in relation to other ideas. There has been a blank in knowledge, but it is not a/

(1) The term 'idea' as used in this paragraph is subject to the specifications of the succeeding paragraph.

a mere blank; it is a blank defined by the ideas which cannot be linked up across it, and an idea has been formulated to fill this blank. It has been judged to be necessary. No ideas are constructed gratuitously; they appear to satisfy demands. And any idea always makes some reference to the demands which it has been formulated to satisfy. It always refers back to its station among the other ideas which prescribe it, and you can accept it only along with and among those other ideas.

So it is with the idea of God in the ontological arguments of Anselm and Descartes. They are not what they are in themselves, but only in relation to other ideas. The words 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' (or the 'supremely perfect') do not evoke a solitary idea, but a whole system of ideas within which 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' (or the 'supremely perfect') has its appropriate place. These ideas are not absolute but relative. Only a system of ideas is absolute, and it only when you are thinking through, and not of it. When it, in its turn, becomes an object of thought, it, too, becomes relative in being placed in a wider system. And there is no end to this process. An idea can be thought only within a system, and if there is nothing outside it to constitute its system, then it cannot be thought. At no point can the idea and its system be identified.

The systems within which the ideas of God of Anselm and Descartes have their places, and from which therefore they derive/

derive their meaning, are series whose initial terms are the things of this world. 'That than which a greater cannot be thought' is the final term of the series, 'great which can be thought', 'greater which can be thought', 'greatest which can be thought'. And the 'supremely perfect' is the final term of the series, 'somewhat perfect', 'more perfect' 'most perfect'. Apart from these series, the ideas of God postulated by Anselm and Descartes have no meaning. And thus to acknowledge one or other of these ideas is to acknowledge one or other of these series. Thus, the idea of God which is the premise of the ontological argument is obtained only through a reference to what will afterwards be regarded as the mere creatures of God, which cannot therefore specify their creator. And so the ontological argument fails to evade the contradiction of the cosmological argument.

'That than which a greater cannot be thought' is thought only through those things than which a greater can be thought. The real question is how these other things are less than they might be. And it is only through the answer to this question that it is possible to realise the meaning of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought'. Anselm's idea of God pre-supposes an advance from the relatively great to the absolutely great, and without thinking this advance it is impossible to think the idea. But in order that we may think this/

this advance, we must start with the lesser greats, which afterwards turn out to be not great at all. We can reach the absolute reality only by filching from it some of its reality to transfer to its appearances.

Thus the first step of Anselm's ontological argument consists in a suppressed re-statement of such a series as forms the first step of his cosmological argument. The series implied by the idea of God postulated in the ontological argument is not identical with the series asserted in the cosmological argument, since in the former it is 'greatness which can be thought' and not value simply which is in question. But this difference does not enable Anselm to evade in the ontological argument the contradiction that has been found in the cosmological argument. The series asserted in the Monologium and the Proslogion are different, but they are both series. And that is the essential point. The idea of the absolute reality has been obtained in both cases by clambering up its appearances.

The only advantage that the specification of God as 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' has over His specification as 'that which is so superior to other things that it is inferior to none' is that the series of which the former is the final term may be plausibly asserted to have a final term, whereas the other may not. In the Monologium, Anselm brought his value series to a close only by means of the general principle that no series is infinite. But in the Proslogion he/

he is enabled to dispense with this in considering not merely 'greatness' simply, but 'greatness which can be thought'.

This, of course, would be quite ineffective if thought were identical with knowledge (understanding), and that were regarded, (as it is by Anselm), as the faculty of truth. In that case the reference to thought would be otiose. 'That than which a greater cannot be thought' would be 'that than which there is no greater', that is, 'the greatest'. Greatness being unqualified, the series whose standard it is, could be brought to a close, as in the case of the cosmological argument, only through the assertion of the general impossibility of an infinite series. But Anselm, although he sometimes repudiates it, makes a distinction between understanding and thought. What can be understood to be, is; and what can be understood not to be, is not. But that is not the case with thought, since the range of thought is not co-extensive with the spread of reality. What is, can be thought not to be, and what is not can be thought to be (1). Thus his qualification of 'greatness' as 'thinkable greatness' is a specification of greatness which enables him to assert a 'greatest'.

(1) Multa cogitamus non esse, quae scimus esse; et multa esse, quae non esse scimus; non existimando, sed fingendo ita esse ut cogitamus. (Liber Apologeticus contra Gaunilonem, Cap. IV.)

'greatest thinkable' where he would not be able to assert a 'greatest' simply. But it still remains true, as he himself recognises (1), that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is obtained as the final term of the series involving those things than which a greater can be thought.

An objection may, at this point, be lodged on behalf of Descartes. Granted, it may be said, that Anselm's idea of God pre-supposes the construction of a series involving the creatures of God, yet that cannot be said of Descartes. It may be agreed that/

(1) Anselm is replying to Gaunilo. "Quod dicis: quo majus cogitari nequit, secundum rem vel ex genere tibi vel ex specie notam, te cogitare auditum, vel in intellectu habere non posse; quoniam nec ipsam rem nosti, nec eam ex alia simili potes cognoscere; palam est rem aliter sese habere. Quoniam namque omne minus bonum in tantum est simile majori bono, in quantum est bonum; patet cuilibet rationali menti quia de minoribus bonis ad majora conscendendo, ex his, quibus aliquid cogitari potest majus, multum possumus conjicere illud, quo nihil potest majus cogitari. Quis enim, verbi gratia, vel hoc cogitari non potest, etiam si non credat in re esse quod cogitat, scilicet, si bonum est aliquid, quod initium et finem habet; multo melius esse bonum, quod, licet incipiat, non tamen desinit: et sicut istud illo melius est, ita isto esse melius illud, quod nec finem habet nec initium, etiamsi semper de praeterito per praesens transeat ad futurum: et sive sit in re aliquid hujusmodi, sive non sit; valde tamen eo melius esse id, quod nullo modo indiget vel cogitur mutari, vel moveri: an hoc cogitari non potest; aut aliquid hoc majus cogitari potest aut non est hoc ex iis, quibus majus cogitari valet, conjicere id quo majus cogitari nequit? Est igitur unde possit conjici, quo majus cogitari nequeat. Sic itaque facile refelli potest insipiens, qui sacram auctoritatem non recipit; si negat, quo majus cogitari non valet, ex aliis rebus conjici posse. At si quis Catholicus hoc neget, meminerit quia invisibilia Dei a creatura mundi, per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur; sempiterna quoque ejus virtus et divinitas (Rom. I. 20). (Ibid, Cap. VIII).

that the idea of God, which is the premise of the ontological argument, cannot be completely in the air. It must have some connection with the rest of our experience. But that is not sufficient to show that it is reached at the end of a series rooted in appearances. The disjunction: 'Either the idea of the absolute reality has no connection with experience, or it is derived from appearances', is false, since there is more in experience than the appearances which are its objects. Besides these, there is that which makes it possible for those appearances to be objects to us at all. And that is the ideal standard through which these appearances are judged to be what they are. Now, in the case of Descartes, at least, this is the derivation of the idea of God. The supremely perfect is connected with experience as the underived and underivable standard of all experience. The imperfect things of this world appear to form a series which culminates in it, only because it is involved in the very apprehension of these imperfect things. It appears to be derived from them because they, in reality, are derived from it. And even though no indications of such a derivation of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' are given by Anselm, yet nevertheless it is still possible to make a similar claim for that, and to maintain that the account he gives of its derivation does not represent his real position, but only the position he ^{allowed} ~~was~~ himself to be forced into in the stress of controversy. It may, at least, be said that the validity/

validity of his argument does not depend on that position, and it is therefore open to anyone to suggest an alternative derivation for his idea of God to safeguard his argument. Thus it may be suggested, in spite of Anselm, that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is prior to the series which culminates in it, and therefore it cannot be held, as it is held here, that the idea is derived from the series.

The strength of this contention for an ideal standard of the supremely perfect, as an ultimate principle of mind, is that it provides a plausible account of that feature of mind which always needs to be insisted on, because it is always in danger of being forgotten. In the desire to obtain over-hastily an exact science of mind, it is continually apt to be thought of as of the same kind as the sciences of matter. That tends to make us forget the activity of the mind, and that omission in the case of cognition, which concerns us here, makes it impossible to give any account of the development of knowledge. On any mechanical theory of mind, increase of knowledge means only increase of the things which are known. But no-one who has not blinded himself to the facts in the interests of a false criterion of exactitude, can believe that increase of knowledge consists merely in the increase of the things which are known. That is certainly an element in it, but it is a derivative element. It ignores that very factor in mind of which it is pretending/

pretending to give an account - the factor of inference, by which we advance from less to greater knowledge. It considers the knowledge which is earlier and that which is later in isolation, and completely ignores the relation between them.

Now, the doctrine that an ideal of knowledge is an indispensable prius of knowledge, which is stated in some form or other by all the philosophers who stand in the main line of the history of philosophy, does attempt to account for this relation. It insists that there are two factors in the development of knowledge: (i) comprehension of the unsatisfactoriness of a prior stage of knowledge, and (ii) comprehension of a subsequent stage which will better that prior stage. But it insists, at the same time, that neither of these factors exists in separation from the other. They are elements of a principle which involves them both - the ideal of knowledge through which all knowledge is thought and to which it always seeks to approximate.

Now, some principle of this kind must undoubtedly be postulated in mind. The problem of mind is more than the problem of its content at any particular time. It is the problem of the development of its content in the past, as that seeks to develop in the future. But it cannot be postulated in the form required by ^{this defence of} the ontological argument, since that, far from saving the development of knowledge, would destroy it. The principle/

principle of the development of mind must be a pure principle, that is, an empty principle. It must be a principle which is always active in thought but is never materialised into a content of thought. If it is materialised into a content, then it will become a phantom luring on to an infinite regress. In order that it may be thought as a content, it will require to be thought through another principle; and then when that principle in its turn becomes a content, it will demand a further principle; and so on indefinitely.

This will be the result of the materialisation in the principle of mind, in so far as it affects that principle itself. But the result will be more serious still on the knowledge which it is pretending to give an account of. As soon as you regard this principle as a standard with a definite content of its own, you are faced with the problem of its applicability to the facts to which it is applied. You have converted it from a principle into a fact, a given, which determines knowledge not de jure but de facto. But knowledge cannot acknowledge any de facto suzerainty. It cannot acknowledge determination by anything but the facts which are its objects, and it cannot therefore acknowledge any action upon these facts by an ultimate standard which it is impossible either to deny or to verify. It is impossible to deny that truth is attainable, because that is a claim made by everybody, even by those who, per impossibile, would attempt to deny it. But the materialisation of the principle/

principle of mind into a standard results in precisely this impossible denial. If such a standard is always active in us, we want a guarantee that it is not distorting the facts that we know through it. But this guarantee can be produced only if the standard ceases to be a standard and becomes a fact which can be related to the facts which, it is said, are known through it. But the possibility of this which is undeniably demanded by knowledge, implies that the standard is not ultimate. We can think without it, since otherwise we could not think it alongside other facts in order that we might judge its relation to these facts, and so justify it as a standard of these facts.

We do undoubtedly use standards in knowledge - we use, for example, a yard-stick. But we use them all as we use yard-sticks, as means to a particular purpose in a particular context, which are to be judged by their efficacy in promoting the fulfilment of that purpose in that context. There is no standard of knowledge in general, because that would be a standard which we could not judge and which, therefore, we would not acquiesce in.

The relation between an earlier and a later stage of knowledge is not a third fact besides these other two facts. And it could have been supposed to be so only on the supposition that the other two were merely external to each other. As soon as it is realised that this is ^{not} so - that the later stage is demanded by the earlier stage itself - then it is seen /

seen that there is no necessity for a standard to intervene between them.

The error which led to the materialisation of the principle of development in mind into a determinate standard arises from abstraction. Descartes doubts; he knows that he doubts; he knows that he is imperfect; he has the notion of the supremely perfect (1). All that this means is that his present knowledge is incoherent and is straining towards coherence. And to account for this he needs no more than his present knowledge as it is developed out of his past knowledge. There is never any such simple opposition as that postulated here between doubt, on the one hand, and knowledge on the other. And consequently there is no need for them to be united by a standard of perfection. The/

- (1) Discours de la Methode, IV.
Meditationes de Prima Philosophiae, III.

It may be noted that this derivation of the idea of God is never presented by Descartes in connection with his ontological argument (that is, the proof of the existence of God from the mere consideration of His nature), but only in connection with one of his cosmological arguments (the proof of the existence of God from the fact that the idea of God exists in us). Thus, in the Fifth Meditation, which contains the ontological argument, no reference is made to the derivation of the idea of God contained in the Third Meditation. The idea of God is presented there (as was stated at the beginning of this paragraph) merely as an idea that he finds in himself (*Certe ejus ideam, nempe entis summe perfecti, non minus apud me invenio, quam cujusvis figurae aut numeri*). And it is similarly presented in the Principia. (When the mind afterwards reviews the different ideas that are in it, it discovers what is by far the chief among them - that of a Being omniscient, all-powerful, and absolutely perfect. Principles of Philosophy, XIV. trans. Veitch).

The present condition of his knowledge is imperfect and is known to be imperfect because it is unstable. Elements in it are in conflict, and it is itself specifying the means to be taken to resolve these conflicts. His doubt - that part of his knowledge which is unsatisfactory - is not isolated from the rest of his knowledge. If it were, it could not be got rid of. It is a part of a larger whole of knowledge which has both brought it about and will resolve it. It is this larger whole within which any knowledge is always contained that performs the functions ascribed to the standard of perfection. Any part of knowledge is always making demands on every other part. It is these demands which search out the weak ^{places} placed in knowledge, and it is these demands that enable these weak places to be patched up. The development of knowledge is determined by the lines of implication which bind together the facts which are the content of knowledge, that is, by the facts in their connection. Beyond these facts in their connection, there is nothing but the mind trying to prove itself equal to them, that is, endeavouring by hypothesis and experiment to get at the facts. This, at any rate, is the claim of anyone who endeavours to know and believes that the attainment of his endeavour is not impossible. And this is open to contradiction by nobody.

Thus this defence of the absoluteness of the idea of God, which is the premise of the ontological argument, fails. It/

It fails because it has not distinguished between the principle of development in mind, which is absolute, and the standards employed by it, which are not absolute. And when this distinction is asserted and the objection refuted, the original contention remains: the idea of God, which is the premise of the ontological argument, is arrived at through something other than itself, and therefore the ontological argument is involved in the contradiction of the cosmological argument.

13. ii. The first count against the ontological argument is that its claim to an underived ideal of God is false: The second is that even although that claim is false, it nevertheless wrecks any attempt to prove the existence of God. The proof of the existence of anything of which we have an idea consists in the tightening up of its connections with the ideas of the facts from which it is derived and by which it has been specified. If, then, it is asserted that it is underived, it is impossible to prove that it exists. Any connection which can be proved to obtain between an idea and facts must be developed from, and determined by, the connection which has been taken up into the initial specification of the idea.

Strictly speaking, there can be no such thing as a proof of the existence of an idea, because there can be no disjunction between the idea and existence. No idea can at any/

any stage be a mere idea unconnected with existence. The ideas which (as has been pointed out in the previous paragraph) specify an idea are ideas of existents, and so the idea that they specify is all along considered as an idea of an existent.

You never start off with a given idea to determine whether or not it exists. You start off with the ideas of a number of existents which are recognised as connected, but whose connections are not completely provided for. If the connections which are recognised to hold between them are to be provided for, another existent is required to mediate between them. This must exist; otherwise it cannot be regarded as interacting with the other existents to provide a comprehensible and comprehensive system. There is no question as to its existence; the only question is as to what exactly it is that exists. At the beginning all that can be said is that it is such that it will provide for the lines of implication between the other existents which are demanded by them, but which they cannot or themselves provide. Thus the very statement of the problem is the first step to its solution. And the subsequent steps of its solution consist in the refinement of the problem with the aid of hypothesis and its correlative, experiment. A vague idea of the demands of the existents which are to be related in a system suggests the general character of the existent which they demand. This is specified as far as possible with our present incomplete knowledge/

knowledge of the existents (incomplete because they have not yet been systematised). And then the effects of the interaction of the suggested existent, along with the other existents, is deduced. If these effects are such as do actually take place, and if, further, no effects which do take place remain unaccounted for, then the suggested nature of the existent is verified. If not, then in the light of the discrepancies between the actual and the inferred effects of the interaction of the existents, the conjecture as to the nature of the further existent is modified. This hypothesis is tested in its turn, and it again is either accepted or modified. And so on.

It may and does happen that in the process of specifying the demands of the existents we postulate, we find that we have been mistaken as to what some of them were. The effects which would follow on their interaction with the conjectured existent are not those which actually follow, because we are in error as to the nature of the existents which we regard as substantiated, and not as to that which we regard as still to be substantiated. And this may go so far as to show that one of the premised existents does not exist at all (1). Again, it may happen as a result of fuller knowledge that the existents which seem to require another existent to round them off into a system, are found not to do so. They are themselves able to account for all the/

(1) This seems, for example, to have happened to the 'ether' as the result of the Mitchelson-Morley experiment.

the effects which follow on their interaction. But when existence is disproved in this way, nothing is left behind in the way of idea. It is an existent - idea plus existence - which is abandoned because it is unnecessary. And in the same way it is an existent - idea plus existence - which can alone be proved. There are no such things as 'floating ideas' - ideas divorced from existence. There are only existents - proved or disproved, conjectured or doubted.

In all this procedure there is no question of existence which is to be added to an idea. The whole argument is concerned with the precise nature of an existent, and the nature of that existent is determined by the demands of the existents among which it is to be placed. In the ontological argument, on the other hand, the existents among which the absolute reality is to be placed are disregarded. And in view of the purpose of the ontological argument, they are rightly disregarded, because absolutely, that is, in relation to the absolute reality, they are not. Thus in the ontological argument we have in our heads an idea of an absolute reality completely free from any entanglements with existents. And we are going to prove that that idea exists - not here or there, not now or at any other time, not in connection with this or that set of existents - but simply.

The ontological argument must adopt this attitude if it is to be a real alternative to the cosmological argument.

But/

But when it has adopted it, it is faced with a complete impasse. Existence under these circumstances, when all connection of the idea with existents is not merely ignored but denied, cannot mean anything at all. Thus even if it is granted that the ontological argument is valid and proves that God exists, it will have gained nothing because no relation has been established between God and anything else. But it is precisely relations between God and other things (notably ourselves) that we are really asking for in a proof of the existence of God. Thus the ontological argument, refusing, as it must, to admit the determinate demands of appearances, and admitting instead only the demand of its idea of God for abstract existence, has simplified its problem to such an extent that any solution which, per impossibile, could be obtained would be worthless.

The ontological argument rests on an untenable distinction between what a thing is, and that it is. It starts with a given 'what', whole and complete, and professes to prove the existence of just that 'what', without allowing for, and even expressly excluding, any alteration in it. What is proved to be at the end is precisely what is not known to be at the beginning. The existence which it is sought to add to this nature, then, is wholly external to it, and being wholly external to it, it is wholly extraneous and therefore wholly immaterial to it. Granting the distinction between the nature and the existence of God, the existence reduces to nothing. Thus, on/

on Anselm's premises, a proof of the existence of God is simply not worth worrying about, since it is what God is, and not that He is that alone is of any importance. This is the reduction of the positions of Anselm and Descartes when their separation of what a thing is from that it is, is made explicit. But this is not the end of the matter, as Hegel seems to think. It is not profitable to continue on this pre-supposition to pour scorn on the category of being as "the utterly abstract" and thus to assert that "the question regarding the being of God ... is of slight importance". (1) It is necessary to go further and to deny that what anything is can be thought without at the same time thinking that it is. Nature and existence are established concurrently. It is impossible to dictate from above what is to be established to exist, since what a thing is, is how it is; and how it is, is that it is.

In the preceding paragraph it was pointed out that the ontological argument is really a cosmological argument, since the idea of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' can be thought only in relation to those things than which a greater can be thought. In this paragraph what is really the same point is made in saying that the ontological argument, in trying to establish the existence of 'that than which a greater cannot be/

(1) Logic of Hegel, trans. Wallace, p. 168.

be thought' viciously differentiates what God is from that He is. The derivation from other things which is necessary and yet, it is asserted, is lacking to the idea of God, according to the first criticism, is the existence that is necessary and yet which cannot be proved of God, according to this second criticism. It is because the idea of God is derivative and yet pretends not to be, that it is impossible to give a meaning to the existence of God which the ontological argument attempts to prove.

On these grounds it must be asserted that not only is the ontological argument vicious, but the criticism it has frequently met with is more vicious. The crucial point in the ontological argument for both Anselm and Descartes and their opponents is the passage from the idea of God to the existence of God. Anselm and Descartes reckon that they can effect this passage. Their opponents say that they cannot. But the crucial point in the argument is not the jump from idea to existence; it is rather the initial separation of idea and existence. There is, and can be, no idea which is not an idea dictated by existents. And idea, to be an idea, must be an idea of something, and there is nothing else but existents for it to be an idea of. That is the count against the arguments of Anselm and Descartes, but it is equally, and more, the count against their critics. The latter rest in the vicious disjunction of understanding from reality, where the former attempt to bridge it. It is impossible to bridge the gap between/

between understanding and reality, as they attempt to do. But then there is no need to bridge it. It is bridged already, since understanding is only of reality. Anselm and Descartes have committed two blunders and their critics only one, but whereas Anselm and Descartes by their second blunder undo their first, their critics obstinately persist in the first. Starting with thought as exclusive of things, it is impossible to get to things. But then thoughts are not exclusive of things; they are of things.

The force of an argument is constituted by the necessity or cogency that runs through it. The argument itself is its necessity. Now this necessity may be said to be a necessity either of thought or of things. There is, and can be, no necessity attaching to thought apart from things. When therefore, as in the ontological argument, the exclusion of thought from things is initially postulated, necessity is ruled out, and consequently argument. It is the absence of cogency that destroys the ontological argument, and the absence of cogency results in the mutual exclusion of thought and reality. When thought is excluded from reality, it must be placed alongside reality as another conglomeration of fact. And then you cannot say that God must be thought, nor even that God is thought. You can say only that God is a fact in thought, and from this there is no possibility of arguing to the conclusion that He is also a fact in reality, since by the dissociation of thought from reality the cogency which constitutes arguments has disappeared./

disappeared. What should have been stated for the ontological argument to be sound, is not merely that God is a fact in thought, but that He cannot but be thought. But this is precisely what cannot be stated by the argument, since that demands an idea of God which is not initially excluded from, but positively demanded by existents. And then the ontological argument would become a cosmological argument in tightening up the connection between the idea and the things that have specified it.

Note: Bradley (Appearance and Reality, p. 395 ff.) has turned this argument for the rejection of the ontological proof into an argument for its acceptance. He to whom we owe the very term 'floating idea' has upheld the most flagrant instance of the heresy which he has most explicitly denounced. (Essays in Truth and Reality: On Floating Ideas). "A thought only in my head, or a bare idea separated from all relation to the world", he says, "is a false abstraction. To hold a thought is, more or less vaguely, to refer it to Reality. And hence an idea wholly un-referred would be a self-contradiction. This general result at once bears on the ontological proof. Evidently the proof must start with an idea referred to, and qualifying Reality, and with Reality present also and determined by the content of the idea. And the principle of the argument is simply this, that standing on one side of such a whole, you find/

find yourself moved necessarily towards the other side. Mere thought because incomplete, suggests logically the other element already implied in it; and that element is the Reality which appears in existence. ... Not every idea will, as such, be real, or as such, have existence. But the greater the perfection of a thought, and the more its possibility and its internal necessity are increased, so much more reality it possesses. And so much the more necessarily must it show itself, and appear somewhere in existence The idea of the Absolute, as an idea, is inconsistent with itself; and we find that, to complete itself, it is internally driven to take in existence."

It is agreed that no ideas are 'floating'. And the question then is: What is to be done about this idea of the Absolute, which is represented as 'floating'? Bradley says that it must be anchored to Reality, so that it may cease to float. He takes it for granted that it is a thoroughly reputable idea, and regards it as suffering from a temporary misfortune. And so, since no reputable ideas float, this reputable^{idea}/must be anchored. But this begs the whole question. If the idea is caught floating, the obvious inference surely is that it is not reputable. At any rate the onus is on the idea to show that it is reputable. It must show itself capable of linking up with Reality /

Reality, and it must provide some explanation of how it came to be separated from Reality. And if it refuses to do this, then it has no claim on us - it must be left floating. But this is precisely what must happen to the idea of the Absolute. It cannot acknowledge a genesis from Reality, and it cannot therefore signify any point at which it could enter Reality. Thus even if we wished to do anything^{for it,} we could not.

The principle: "To hold a thought is ... to refer it ^{us} to Reality", does not justify/in first constructing an unREFERRED thought, and then afterwards referring it to Reality. It expressly forbids it. Every thought from the very beginning must be referred to Reality, precisely because, "an idea wholly unREFERRED is a contradiction". The ontological argument does not start "with an idea referred to and qualifying Reality". If it did, then there would be no reason for it to proceed. It is because the idea is unREFERRED at the beginning that it is necessary to proceed with the proof that it must be referred. Nor, on the other hand, does the argument start "with Reality present also and determined by the content of the idea", since if it did, the whole object of the argument would have been attained. Bradley cannot have it both ways: either there is a movement from idea to existence, or there is not. If there is not, the argument is unnecessary. If there is, it is, on his own premises, impossible.

Thought/

Thought and Reality, again, are not sides of any whole, such that "standing on one side of [it] , you find yourself moved necessarily towards the other". If you pre-suppose a separation between Thought and Reality, this principle will doubtless be useful in connecting them. But it is unnecessary to pre-suppose any such separation. And this is what the denial of 'floating ideas' means. Thought is always of Reality, and Reality is always as thought. You cannot stand on either of these for any fraction of time without involving the other. In standing on either you are already, and in virtue of that very fact, standing on the other. "Mere thought, because incomplete," cannot suggest logically "... the Reality which appears in existence". Logical suggestion, that is, implication, holds in thought only so far as thought is of reality. The true implications of thought are the real connections of things. If, then, you initially dissociate thought from reality, you have deprived yourself of all implication, and therefore of that by which alone you can associate thought with reality. Thus apart from ^{thought's} ~~the~~ connection with reality it is impossible to assert degrees of perfection, or possibility, or internal necessity, among thoughts. And it is impossible, therefore, to argue that as thoughts possess these in greater or less degree, so will they possess in greater or less degree the reality which appears in existence. It is only as thoughts are of existents in relation to/

to other existents, that they possess perfection, or possibility, or necessity. These are all relations which hold among existents and therefore are thought of, only so far as the existents among which they hold, are thought. They cannot attach to thoughts; when by hypothesis, they are not of reality, and so they cannot determine the degree to which thoughts exist.

And so, finally, "the idea of the Absolute, as an idea" cannot be "inconsistent with itself", so that "to complete itself, it is internally driven to take in existence". The idea we have of an existent, is inconsistent with itself when it cannot satisfy the legitimate demands of the existents among which it has a place. But this cannot be the case with the idea of the Absolute which, at the beginning of the ontological argument, is a mere idea. It is not the idea of an existent, and therefore it is not called upon to satisfy the demands of any other existents. And so, because it pretends to do nothing, it cannot prove itself insufficient to its pretensions, and thus will not be driven to take in existence in order to attain consistency. Being initially a 'floating idea', it must for ever remain a 'floating idea'.

14. These considerations are verified by Gaunilo's examination of Anselm's argument, and Anselm's reply to it.

Anselm argues: God is 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' and even the fool who says in his heart that there/

there is no God, understands this when he hears it. And what he understands is in his understanding, even if he does not understand it to be. For something can be in the understanding, without it being understood to be. For example, when a painter knows before-hand what he is going to paint, he certainly has his picture in understanding, although he does not yet understand it to be, because he has not yet painted it. When, however, he has painted it, he both has it in understanding and understands it to be. Thus 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' must be in the understanding even of the fool, because when he hears this, he understands it, and whatever he understands is in the understanding.

But 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' cannot be in understanding alone. For if it is in understanding alone, it can be thought to be also in reality, because what is in understanding and in reality is greater than what is in understanding alone. If, then, 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is in understanding alone, it is not that than which a greater cannot be thought. But this is impossible. Therefore 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' exists both in understanding and in reality (1).

(1) "Ergo, Domine, qui das fidei intellectum, da mihi ut, quantum scis expedire, intelligam quia et sicut credimus; et hoc es, quod credimus. Et quidem credimus te esse aliquid, quo nihil majus cogitari possit. An ergo non est aliqua talis natura, quia dixit insipiens in corde suo: Non est Deus? (Psal. XIII. 1.) Sed certe idem ipse insipiens, cum/

Gaunilo objects: If 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is in the fool's understanding only because he understands what is said to him, then apparently it is in his understanding in the same way as objects which he knows to be false or which he does not know to be true. But since the aim of the argument is to prove to the fool that he cannot but know that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is not false, then it must be established that it is in his understanding in some other way than false or doubtful things. And then to understand anything would be to think that that thing is, as distinct from merely thinking it. Thus, if the fool is to understand, and not merely to think 'that than which a greater cannot be thought', he must not merely think it, but further think/

cum audit hoc ipsum quod dico, aliquid quo majus nihil cogitari potest; intelligit quod audit, et quod intelligit in intellectu ejus est; etiamsi non intelligat illud esse. Aliud est enim rem esse in intellectu; aliud intelligere rem esse. Nam cum pictor praecogitat quae facturum est, habet quidem in intellectu; sed nondum esse intelligit quod nondum fecit. Cum vero jam pinxit, et habet in intellectu esse quod jam fecit. Convincitur ergo etiam insipiens esse vel in intellectu aliquid, quo nihil majus cogitari potest; quia hoc cum audit, intelligit; et quicquid intelligitur in intellectu est. Et certe id, quo majus cogitari nequit, non potest esse in intellectu solo. Si enim vel in solo intellectu est, potest cogitari esse et in re: quod majus est. Si ergo id, quo majus cogitari non potest, est in solo intellectu, idipsum, quo majus cogitari non potest, est quo majus cogitari potest: sed certe hoc esse non potest. Existit ergo procul dubio aliquid, quo majus cogitari non valet, et in intellectu, et in re. (Proslogion, Cap. II).

think that it is. But if this is so, it will not be one thing to have 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' in the understanding and another thing to understand that it is, as in the case of the picture which is first in the soul of the painter and only afterwards in reality. (1).

The difference between the two cases is that of artistic creation and knowledge. What the artist is going to create certainly has an existence in his understanding before he has created it, since his creation is in some sense independent of its material embodiment (2). But this is not so when it is a question of knowledge. In that case, where to understand an object means to know that it is in reality, it cannot be said to be in the knower's understanding as the picture is in the painter's understanding, since in the case of knowledge what is understood is one thing, and the understanding of it is another (except in the case of introspection, where what is understood is itself the understanding). Thus, even granting it is true that there is something than which a greater cannot be thought - and the whole object of the argument is to prove this - even then it cannot be in the understanding as a picture not yet painted is in the/

(1) Gaunilo: Liber pro Insipiente, Cap. II.

(2) As Augustine has it: Cum faber arcam facturum in opere, prius habet illam in arte: arca, quae fit in opere, non est vita; arca, quae est in arte, vita est; quia vivit anima artificis, in qua sunt ista omnia, antequam proferantur. (Quoted by Gaunilo, Liber pro Insipiente, Cap. III).

the painter's understanding (1).

Thus, even if it is argued that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is in the fool's understanding as false or doubtful things are, the argument is not valid. Pre-supposing that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is in reality as the only means of ensuring that it is understood, yet even so it will not be in the understanding, so that it may then be re-asserted that it is in reality. Anselm's argument cannot even be circular.

If the argument, then, is to retain any cogency, the only existence that can belong to 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' in the fool's understanding is the existence which it has in common with false or doubtful things. But then the existence of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' in the understanding, as it cannot be differentiated from the existence of false or doubtful things, cannot be used to prove any true existence outside the understanding. "If", says Gaunilo, "it can be said that that object which cannot be thought according to the truth of any reality is in the understanding, then I do not deny that in this way it is in the understanding. But because in this way it cannot obtain any real being, I do not concede that being to it until it is proved to me by an indubitable argument. But he who says that this is so, because otherwise/

(1) Liber pro Insipiente, Cap. III.

otherwise what is greater than all things will not be greater than all things, does not sufficiently consider the understanding of the fool when he hears these words. For I do not yet affirm, but rather deny or doubt, that it is greater than any true reality. Nor do I concede to it any other being than that (if it is fit to be called being) which is given to it when the soul tries to portray to itself an utterly unknown reality according to the words which are heard. How, then, is it proved to me that that "greater" subsists in the truth or reality because it is greater than all things, when I continue to deny or doubt that?" (1).

In order that the existence in reality of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' may be demonstrated through its existence in understanding, its existence in understanding may not be differentiated from the existence of false or doubtful things. But as it is impossible to argue from the existence of false or doubtful things in understanding to their existence in reality, so it is impossible to argue from the existence in understanding of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' to its existence in reality, since the existence in understanding of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' cannot be differentiated/

(1) Gaunilo: Liber pro Insipiente, Cap. V. It will be noted that Gaunilo here misrepresents Anselm's position to the extent of speaking as if the question at issue concerned 'that which is greater than all things' instead of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought'. But this (which seems to be no more than a careless slip), does not affect the force of his argument, as Anselm seems to think.

differentiated from the existence in understanding of false or doubtful things.

Anselm replies to this argument by denying the distinction on which it is based. It is not, he argues, a question of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' being in the fool's understanding either as a reality or as an unreality, since it can be in understanding to some extent without being either completely understood or not understood at all. And it is to some extent, at any rate, understood even by the fool because statements about it are understood (1); because it is spoken in a familiar language (2); because it is denied (3). And this understanding of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' involves no reference to its existence in reality. "At the beginning", he says, "it was enough for me to say that that was understood and in the understanding in some way, since it was afterwards considered whether it was only in the understanding (as a false object would be), or whether it was also in reality as a true object would be." (4)

And thus he disposes of Gaunilo's attempt to discredit the analogy between art and knowledge. "Your careful proofs that that than which a greater cannot be thought is not comparable to the existence of a picture not yet painted in the understanding/

- (1) Anselm: Liber Apologeticus contra Gaunilonem, Cap. I.
- (2) Ibid, Cap. II.
- (3) Ibid, Cap. IX.
- (4) Ibid, Cap. VI.

understanding of the painter are without bearing on the argument. For I have not cited the picture so that I might say that it is like 'that than which a greater cannot be thought', but only so that I might say that something which is not understood to be is in the understanding." (1)

Anselm then defends his argument against Gaunilo's attempt by arguing that initially it is immaterial to him whether or not 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is believed to exist in reality, since initially he is not concerned with its affirmation or denial in understanding, but simply with its being an object of understanding. And as that which is understood is regarded as simply an object of understanding, so the existence in understanding which is inferred from that is not a judgment, but a simple idea. The existence of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' in understanding neither is, nor is not, the existence of false or doubtful things in understanding. It is an existent which has not been qualified either as true or false or doubtful. It simply is.

Gaunilo, apparently, did not return to his attack upon Anselm. But the clarification of his position to which Gaunilo forced Anselm makes it very easy to push home his attack. By asserting that the existence of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' in the fool's understanding is a mere unqualified idea/

(1) Ibid, Cap. VIII.

idea, Anselm has safeguarded the opening of his argument only at the cost of frustrating its development. It is not an idea of anything, and hence it is impossible for it to be shown to be, at the end, anything other than what it is at the beginning. And thus it cannot move beyond understanding into understanding and reality, as Anselm asserts.

In order to demonstrate the existence of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' in reality beyond understanding, Anselm asserts that existence in understanding alone is insufficient to satisfy its pretension to be the understanding of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought'. But 'that than which a greater cannot be thought', as a simple unqualified existent in the understanding, has no pretensions, because it is not the understanding of anything. Hence you cannot say that it ought to be anything other than it is. You can say this only of ideas which are of something beyond themselves which they are continually trying to be equal to. But 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' in the understanding of the fool refers to nothing outside itself. It is part of no judgment. It simply is.

What is in our understanding is subject to specification because it is the understanding of an existent among other existents. Hence it may be specified either directly by the existent which is its immediate object, or indirectly by the existents among which that existent has a place, so far as they are/

are understood. Now, 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' cannot be directly specified by the existent which is its object, since that is not known directly as an existent. It must therefore be specified by the existents among which it is placed. 'That than which a greater cannot be thought' will, then, be the idea of a gap in knowledge ("an aching void") which is determined by our understanding of those things than which a greater can be thought. It is demanded by them, and hence it must be what they demand it to be. It owes it to them to be in a position to do whatever it pretends to do in its place among them. This is the only basis for the development of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' beyond understanding into reality. But this development cannot be asserted in the ontological argument, since that is an argument which allows no derivation for its idea of God.

The incompatibility of the first and second parts of the ontological argument, is made more evident by Anselm's further development of his position. In order that he may explain how the fool says in his heart that there is no God, Anselm distinguishes two senses in which anything can be thought. In one way (secundum voces) only the words signifying it are thought; in the other (secundem rem) the thing itself is understood. And he then maintains that, while in the former way God can be thought not to be, yet in the latter He cannot, just as fire and water cannot be confused if the things themselves are thought/

thought, although they can be confused if only the words signifying them are thought(1).

But the denial of the fool, which forms the starting point of the ontological argument, is, on Anselm's own showing, a denial secundum voces. Thus, on Anselm's own premises, it is impossible for the argument to have any cogency, since cogency is found only in thought secundum rem.

The real problem of the ontological argument is to demonstrate how from thought secundum voces of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought', the fool must advance to thought secundum rem. But Anselm suggests no way in which this can be effected, and while he insists that his argument proves the existence/

(1) Verum quomodo dixit insipiens in corde suo quod cogitare non potuit; aut quomodo cogitare non potuit, quod dixit in corde? cum idem sit dicere in corde, et cogitare. Quod si vere, imo quia vere et cogitavit, quia dixit in corde; et non dixit in corde, quia cogitare non potuit; non uno tantum modo dicitur aliquid in corde vel cogitatur. Aliter enim cogitatur res, cum vox eam significans cogitatur; aliter cum idipsum, quod res est, intelligitur. Illo itaque modo potest cogitari Deus non esse; isto vero, minime. Nullus quippe intelligens id quod sunt ignis et aqua, potest cogitare ignem esse aquam secundum rem; licet hoc possit, secundum voces. Ita igitur nemo intelligens id quod Deus est, potest cogitare quia Deus non est; licet haec verba dicat in corde, aut sine ulla, aut cum aliqua extranea significatione. Deus enim est id quo majus cogitari non potest. Quod qui bene intelligit, utique intelligit idipsum sic esse, ut nec cogitatione queat non esse. Qui ergo intelligit sic esse Deum, nequit eum non esse cogitare. (Anselm, Proslogion, Cap IV. Compare Monologium, Cap. X.)

existence of God from His idea alone, he cannot suggest any way in which this can be effected. The direct and immediate assumption that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is understood secundum rem would assert that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is in reality - and this is precisely the point at issue. But failing this, it will have to be argued that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' comes to be understood secundum rem because other realities necessitate it. And then the ontological argument will have destroyed itself in becoming a cosmological argument.

15. iii. The first line of Gaunilo's attack on Anselm's ontological argument has been to show that the attempt to prove the existence of God from the idea of God alone fails, because such an idea, as it is divorced from, and yet seeks, reality, does not contain within itself any ground for the development demanded by the argument. In his other main line of attack, he effects a reductio ad absurdum of Anselm's argument on the assumption of its validity.

Anselm argues that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' must exist both in understanding and reality, because existence in both understanding and reality is greater than existence in reality alone, and must therefore belong to that which, by definition, is the greatest thinkable. Now, it seems that/

that this same argument will apply not only to what is unconditionally the greatest thinkable, but also to what is the greatest thinkable of any class. If the existence of 'that than which nothing at all can be thought greater', can be established, as Anselm thinks, then similarly, it would seem, the existence of 'that than which nothing of a given class can be thought greater', can be similarly established. And thus it would seem that we may parody and so disprove Anselm's argument by demonstrating, for example, the existence of an island than which a greater cannot be thought.

Suppose that anyone disbelieves in an island than which a greater cannot be thought, he at least understands what is meant by it. And what he understands is in his understanding. Thus, an island than which a greater cannot be thought is in his understanding. But it cannot merely be in his understanding, for then it would not be an island than which a greater cannot be thought, since a greater island could be thought. Thus, an island than which a greater cannot be thought exists both in understanding and in reality (1).

Thus/

(1) Gaunilo: Liber pro Insipiente, Cap. VI. Gaunilo's argument is not so cogent as it is here represented to be. He again commits the mistake of supposing that the question at issue concerns that which is greater than all things, and hence parodies Anselm's argument in proving the existence of an island greater than all islands. To this extent he is open to correction by Anselm, but he can accept this correction without impairing the force of his argument.

Thus then, on Anselm's principles, it is possible to prove the existence of an island than which a greater cannot be thought, and similarly it would be possible to prove the existence of a chair, or table, or pen, than which a greater cannot be thought. But, it will be agreed, the existence of an island (or chair, or table, or pen) than which a greater cannot be thought cannot be proved in this way. Thus Anselm's principles, implying consequences which are false, must themselves be false. And thus the ontological argument is disproved.

In order that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' may be proved to exist, it would have to be shown that it is demanded by those things than which a greater can be thought. Now, this cannot be done since there is no necessity attaching to the generating relation of the series, great, greater, greatest. Granted that X is a greater thinkable than Y, yet there is no necessity to grant X when you have granted Y. On the other hand, if it is assumed that there is necessity here so that you must acknowledge the existence of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought', then, Gaunilo points out, you will have to acknowledge similarly the existence of an island than which a greater cannot be thought.

Even if 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' has been proved to exist because it is demanded by those things than which a greater can be thought (and that is the only way it can be proved), yet even then the existence of God has not been/

been proved. It is not enough, as Anselm realised in his cosmological argument, to exhibit God as being more valuable than anything else, nor is it enough to exhibit Him as that than which a more valuable cannot be thought. Besides this, you must show Him as that on which all other things depend - as that which alone is real and through which whatever else is real receives its reality. It is not enough for God to exist side by side with His creatures separated from them only by a degree of greatness. He must be shown further as the creator and sustainer of these other things. Whatever greatness may mean (1), it cannot include a reference to the dependence of what is less great on what is more great, unless that has been expressly provided for. And that has not been provided for by Anselm. Thus it is necessary to supplement the ontological argument, which proves the existence of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought', by another argument which provides for a difference in status between 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' and the things among which it exists. This Anselm provides in the Proslogion by a proof that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' not only is, but cannot be thought not to be. And it is by this elaboration of his ontological argument that he attempts in the Liber Apologeticus to meet Gaunilo's reductio ad absurdum of the argument, which proceeds/

(1) The only elucidation of the term given by Anselm is in the Monologium: "Dico autem non magnum spatium, ut est corpus aliquod; sed quod quanto majus: tanto melius est aut dignius. ut est sapientia." (Cap. II).

proceeds on the supposition that the difference between 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' and other things is simply a difference of thinkable greatness, and hence is the same as the difference which holds between an island than which a greater cannot be thought, and an island than which a greater can be thought.

In the Proslogion Anselm argues: Something which cannot be thought not to be, can be thought to be. And this is greater than what can be thought not to be. Thus 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' must be that which cannot be thought not to be, since otherwise it would not be that than which a greater cannot be thought. Thus 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is so truly that it cannot be thought not to be, and therefore it is to a greater extent than all other things, since whatever else is, is not so truly, and so has less being (1).

Thus, in place of advancing from appearances to an absolute/

247. (1)* Quod id quo majus cogitari non valet utique sic vere est, ut nec cogitari possit non esse. Nam potest cogitari esse aliquid quod non possit cogitari non esse; quod majus est, quam quod non esse cogitari potest. Quare si id, quo quo majus nequit cogitari, potest cogitari non esse: idipsum quo majus cogitari nequit, non est id quo majus cogitari nequit: quod convenire non potest. Sic ergo vere est aliquid quo majus cogitari non potest, ut nec cogitari possit non esse: et hoc es tu, Domine Deus noster. Sic ergo vere es, Domine, Deus meus, ut nec cogitari possis non esse; et merito. Si enim aliqua mens posset cogitare aliquid melius te, ascenderet creatura super Creatorem, et judicaret de Creatore: quod valde est absurdum. Et quidem quidquid est aliud praeter solum te, potest cogitari non esse. Solus igitur verissime omnium, et ideo maxime omnium habes esse; quia quidquid aliud est, non sic vere/

absolute reality along a dependence series, as well as along a value series (see Paragraph 11), Anselm supplements his proof of the existence of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' by a proof of its necessary existence. Since the absolute reality has not yet been specified in the proof of its existence as the absolute reality which accounts for all appearances, it is sought to give it that status among appearances by showing that it has so much more being than other things that it cannot be thought not to be, while anything else can.

But then, as Gaunilo's reductio ad absurdum shows, if this qualification of the existence of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is subsequent to the establishment of its existence, then it will not save that existence from attacks which are based on the supposition that there is no difference between its existence and that of other things. The proof that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' cannot be thought not to be must not be other than the proof that it is. Thus, in his reply to Gaunilo, where he is constantly pre-occupied with Gaunilo's island argument (1), Anselm is far more concerned with formulating a new ontological argument proving directly that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' cannot be thought not to be, than with defending his old ontological argument that it is. Thus in the Liber Apologeticus the argument which in the Proslogion/

vere est, et idcirco minus habet esse. (Anselm, Proslogion Cap. III).

(1) Liber Apologeticus, Cap, I, III, V.

Proslogion had been merely a specification of the existence (previously proved) of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought', becomes the proof itself of that existence.

The ontological argument, as thus re-formulated, becomes:

All those things which have beginning or end, and all those things which are not as wholes at any place or at any time, can be thought not to be (1).

But beyond those things which can be thought not to be, we can think something which cannot be thought not to be, and this is greater than those things which can be thought not to be (2).

(1) Procul dubio quidquid alicubi aut aliquando non est, etiamsi est alicubi aut aliquando; potest tamen cogitari nunquam et nusquam esse, sicut non est alicubi aut aliquando. Nam quod heri non fuit, et hodie est: sicut heri non fuisse intelligitur; ita nunquam esse subintelligi potest: et quod hic non est, et alibi est, sicut non est hic, ita potest cogitari nusquam esse. Similiter cujus partes singulae non sunt ubi aut quando sunt aliae partes ejus; omnes partes, et ideo ipsum totum, possunt cogitari nunquam aut nusquam esse. Nam etsi dicatur tempus semper esse, et mundus ubique; non tamen illud totum semper, aut iste totus est ubique: et sicut singulae partes temporis non sunt, quando aliae sunt; ita possunt nunquam esse cogitari; et singulae mundi partes, sicut non sunt ubi aliae sunt; ita subintelligi possunt nusquam esse: sed et quod partibus conjunctum est, cogitatione dissolvi, et non esse potest. Quare quidquid alicubi aut aliquando totum non est, etiamsi est, potest cogitari non esse. (Liber Apologeticus, Cap. I.).

(2) Ibid, Cap. I, IV, IX.

Therefore 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is what cannot be thought not to be:

(a) It cannot be thought except without beginning and end, but whatever can be thought to be and is not, can be thought to have beginning and end. Therefore it cannot be thought not to be (1).

(b) If it could be thought not to be, it would not be 'that than which a greater cannot be thought'. Therefore it cannot not-be (2).

(c) Suppose that it is not. Then if it were, it would not be 'that than which a greater cannot be thought'. Therefore it cannot not-be (3).

In this exposition of the distinction between what can and what cannot be thought not to be, the basis is the single thing, and the criterion is its bare presence or absence. When then, it is decided that anything is not what cannot be thought not to be, the negation involved is not particularised and grounded, but abstract and immediate. And the nature of this negation is necessitated by the purpose and pre-supposition of Anselm's argument. Since God is to be proved to be through Himself alone, things must be considered in isolation, and their necessary or their accidental being can be found only in themselves. It/

(1) Anselm, Liber Apologeticus, Cap. I, III

(2) Ibid, Cap. I, V.

(3) Ibid, Cap. I, V.

It cannot be a product of mediation; it must be immediate, and so abstract.

A thing, then, cannot be thought not to be only so long as it is immediately presented, whenever and wherever one chooses to look. The only necessity Anselm recognises in a thing is thus the unmediated existence which makes a thing appear whenever and wherever it is sought. A thing thus has being first in proportion to the amount of space that it fills and the amount of time that it occupies. And, secondly, it has being in proportion to its indivisibility into parts. Things that are composed of parts cannot be said to have more being than their parts, since the whole is the sum of their parts. But each part of a thing has less being than the whole of which it is a part, since it is not where and when the other parts of the thing are. Thus, the being of anything will decrease as it is split into parts and these parts into other parts, and so on. Then, since no limit can be placed to this process of analysis, so no limit can be placed to a thing's loss of being on analysis. Thus, even the wholes of space and time (space and time themselves are lacking in reality, since neither is as a whole everywhere and always.

Everything, then, which is not as a whole everywhere and always can be thought not to be. And thus the assertion that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is what cannot be thought not to be is the assertion that it is a whole indivisible/

indivisible into parts, which is everywhere and always.

But, granting that this identification of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' and the indivisible whole which is always and everywhere, has been made out, yet still this cannot be regarded as a proof of the existence of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought, unless it has been previously proved that an indivisible whole, present always and everywhere, exists. But no such proof, nor any suggestion of such a proof, is given by Anselm. And it is impossible for any such proof to be given. The indivisible whole which is always and everywhere, though it is what cannot be thought not to be, is yet stated, and can only be stated, as what can be thought to be. And the statement that what cannot be thought not to be can be thought to be, is certainly not equivalent to the statement that it is, since the criterion of thought (as it is differentiated from understanding) is expressly asserted by Anselm to be other than the criterion of existence. (See page 73).

But, failing any proof that what cannot be thought not to be exists, its identification with 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' can be regarded only as a specification of its existence after it has been proved to exist, and not as a proof of that existence itself. And that brings us back to the ontological argument of the Proslogion, which is open to the reductio ad absurdum of Gaunilo.

Thus, you cannot prove the necessary existence of
'that/

'that than which a greater cannot be thought' either after or at the same time, as you prove its existence. If you attempt to prove its necessary existence after you have proved its existence, your proof of its existence, failing at the same time to prove its necessary existence, will be open to attacks which regard its existence as of the same kind as that of other things. And if you attempt to prove its necessary existence at the same time as its existence, you have to pre-suppose the existence of a necessary existent, so that its identification with the necessary existent may be regarded as a proof of its existence. And you cannot do this, because the idea of a necessary existent has been constructed by a thought which, by definition, is divorced from existence.

Anselm has to add necessity to the existence of 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' in order to lift it out of the ruck of those things than which a greater can be thought. And he has to lift it above these things because he will not, and cannot, show it in its place among them. It is true, as Anselm realises between the Proslogion and the Liber Apologeticus, that a proof of existence cannot be other than a proof of necessary existence. But Anselm cannot prove necessity along with existence, because he regards a proof of existence as other than an establishment of nature. The demonstration that a thing is necessarily is simply a demonstration that it is. But the demonstration that it is, is the demonstration at the same time of/

of what it is. It is what is demanded at a certain point in a certain context. If, from the beginning, you take into consideration the other things among which anything is to be, you do not have to lift it above these things by attributing to it a greater degree of being than you attribute to them. You will not need to insist, as Anselm does against Gaunilo (1), that your proof applies only to the thing you are considering because its being is unique. You will obtain uniqueness for what you are proving so that your proof cannot be parodied, as Anselm's can, because the position the thing occupies in its context is unique. It will be unique in its relations, and hence in its nature, and so you will not need uniqueness for its being. Or rather, you will have provided uniqueness of being in obtaining uniqueness of relations to other things, since a thing's being is its relations to other things. And a demonstration of its being, or of its necessary being (whichever you please), is a demonstration that a thing in these relations to other things is required by these other things.

In the ontological argument, you have to prove the being and the necessity of God, as in the cosmological argument you/

(1) Fidens loquor; quia si quis invenerit mihi aliquid aut reipsa, aut sola cogitatione existens, praeter quo majus cogitari non possit, cui aptare valeat connexionem hujus meae argumentationis, inveniam, et dabo illi perditam insulam amplius non perdendam. (Liber Apologeticus, Cap. III).

you have to prove Him as the final term of a value series and also as the final term of a dependent series. And you have to prove these separately because you have to prove identity and difference between God and His creatures separately. And that follows from the fact that what you are trying to prove is an absolute reality which cannot be specified by the things among which it is placed, because they are its mere appearances. Since it is impossible to attribute any reality to the appearances of the absolute reality outside the absolute reality, and hence, since it is impossible to prove an absolute reality by a demonstration that it is demanded by its appearances, it is necessary to demonstrate the absolute reality in another world than that in which the appearances exist. Thus Anselm attempts to construct a world where the principles of 'thought' hold, alongside a world where the principles of 'understanding' hold. But it is impossible permanently to maintain two worlds existing alongside, and yet externally, to each other. And that is never Anselm's intention. He goes out of the world of understanding to find an absolute reality, to come back to the world of understanding with it. But since he has found his absolute reality only in the world of thought which is outside understanding, he cannot bring it back into the world of understanding. The world of understanding admits only what has been specified, and thus demonstrated to be, within its own borders

The ontological argument does not fail because of any discontinuity between thought (which is understanding) and actuality, so that it may be asserted that what we cannot but think may be other than what is. It fails because it recognises two kinds of thought: that which, being from first to last in touch with actuality, regards implication as consisting in the actual connection of actualities; and that which acknowledges implications other than the relations between actualities; and then, starting with the first, attempts to advance from that to the second. Unless you regard thought from the beginning as of actuality, and hence acknowledge no implications which are not actually relations between actualities, you cannot advance to thought of actuality, since you can never justify the implications by which you advance from the one thought to the other as actual.

Thus, the alternative to the ontological argument is not scepticism, as some Idealists would have us believe. It is a belief in thought as one and indivisible - as always of reality. Scepticism would be the alternative to the ontological argument only if we began from thought which is not of actuality, and then had to bridge the gap between thought and actuality by the ontological argument. But no bridge is necessary, because there is no gap. And, on the other hand, if there were any gap, it would be impossible to bridge it.

Note: The ontological arguments of Descartes and Spinoza show no advance on the ontological argument of Anselm, and the principles already elucidated to cover Anselm's argument also account for, and at the same time refute, the arguments of Descartes and Spinoza. And it is Anselm's argument, and not those of Descartes and Spinoza, which has been responsible for the re-emergence of the ontological argument in contemporary Idealism, since it was to Anselm's argument that Hegel turned after Kant had successfully attacked that which has descended from Descartes, through Leibnitz and Wolff. In considering the arguments of Descartes and Spinoza, I shall therefore restrict myself to noting the identity between their arguments and Anselm's, the divergencies they attempt, and the superficial fallacies that they contain.

Descartes differentiates his ontological argument from that of Anselm through Thomas' criticism of Anselm which Caterus urges against him (1).

Following Thomas, Caterus argues: Even if it be granted that a supremely perfect being implies existence by its very/

(1) "... dato quod ab omnibus per hoc nomen, Deus, intelligatur aliquid quo majus cogitari non possit, non necesse erit aliquid esse quo majus cogitari non potest in rerum natura. Eodem enim modo necesse est poni rem et nominis rationem. Ex hoc autem quod mente concipitur quod profertur hoc nomine, Deus, non sequitur Deum esse, nisi in intellectu. Unde nec oportebit id, quo majus cogitari non potest/

very name, it does not follow that that existence is actual, but only that the concept of existence is inseparably joined to the concept of a supreme being. Thus, you cannot infer that the existence of God is actual unless you have pre-supposed that that supreme being actually exists, for then, and only then, will it actually contain all perfections and thus that of real existence.

And he illustrates his contention by considering the complex: leo existens. This includes essentially both lion and existence. And hence the clear and distinct idea that God has of it essentially involves its existence. But nevertheless, the distinct knowledge which God has of that complex does not constrain either part of it to be, unless it is assumed that the whole complex is, for then and only then will it involve all its essential perfections, and hence also actual existence (1).

And, on the other hand, Caterus might have added, as did Gaunilo, if the fact that existence is contained in the supremely/

potest, esse nisi in intellectu; et ex hoc non sequitur quod sit aliquid in rerum natura, quo majus cogitari non possit. Et sic nullum inconueniens accidit ponentibus Deum non esse. Non enim inconueniens est, quolibet dato vel in re, vel in intellectu, aliquid majus cogitari posse, nisi ei qui concedit esse aliquid, quo majus cogitari non possit in rerum natura." (Thomas; Summa contra Gentiles, Lib.I, Cap.XI).

(1) Primae Objectiones.

supremely perfect is a proof that the supremely perfect exists, so the fact that existence is contained in the complex, existent lion, or existent unicorn, will be a proof also that a lion exists, or that a unicorn exists. But, it will be agreed, a lion or a unicorn cannot be proved to exist in this way. Therefore neither can the supremely perfect.

Descartes accepts Thomas', and hence Caterus', criticism of Anselm's ontological argument, but denies it of his own. He agrees that the only conclusion to be drawn from Anselm's ontological argument is: "ergo, intellecto quid significet hoc nomen Deus, intelligitur significari Deum esse in re et in intellectu," and that this is insufficient for the conclusion: "Existit ergo procul dubio aliquid, quo majus cogitari non valet, et in intellectu et in re." But, he says, his own argument is different:

What we clearly and distinctly understand to belong to the true and immutable nature, or essence, or form, of anything can be truly affirmed of that thing.

But after we have sufficiently accurately investigated what God is, we clearly and distinctly understand that it belongs to His true and immutable nature to exist.

Therefore, we can truly affirm of God that He exists (1).

Thus Descartes differentiates his ontological argument from/

(1) Primae Responsiones.

from Anselm's because he considers the true and immutable nature of God, whereas Anselm considers only the meaning of the term, God. And to support this contention, he brings forward a general criterion by which we may know when we have obtained ideas of true and immutable natures, and when we have not. Those ideas, he says, which do not contain true and immutable natures but only fictitious natures constructed by the understanding, can be divided by the understanding, not only through abstraction, but through a clear and distinct operation. Hence any idea which the understanding cannot divide cannot have been constructed by it, and so must be the idea of a true and immutable nature. Now, when we think 'winged horse' or 'lion actually existing' or 'triangle inscribed in square', we easily understand that we can, on the contrary, think 'horse not winged', or 'lion not existing', or 'triangle without square'. Therefore these ideas are not of true and immutable natures. But if, on the other hand, we think 'triangle', or 'square', then certainly whatever we discern to be contained in 'triangle', (e.g. that its three angles are equal to two right-angles), we can truly affirm of all triangles. And, similarly, whatever we can clearly and distinctly discern to be contained in the idea of 'square', we can truly affirm of square. For although we can understand 'triangle' in abstraction from the fact that its three angles are equal to two right-angles, we cannot nevertheless deny that its three angles are equal to two right-angles.

Now/

Now if we enquire about that which has all those perfections which can be together, we shall see that it exists necessarily in exactly the same way as the three angles of a triangle are necessarily equal to two right-angles. For, in the first place, we clearly and distinctly perceive that possible existence, at least, is predicable of it as it is of all things which we distinctly perceive, even those which are put together by the understanding. And then, because we cannot think that its existence is possible without, at the same time, recognising that it can exist by its own force, we therefore conclude that it really exists, and from eternity has existed, for it is evident that what can exist by its own power always does exist. Thus we understand that existence is contained in the idea of a supremely powerful being, not through a figment of the understanding, but because it pertains to the true and immutable nature of such a being to exist.(1).

Thus Descartes asserts that his ontological argument proceeds secundum rem, while Anselm's proceeds secundum voces. Now, it has been argued (Paragraph 14.), this contention can only be justified either by assuming that God is a reality, or by proving that He is a reality because He is demanded by other realities, so that the ontological argument will become either a petitio principii or a cosmological argument. But Descartes asserts/

(1) Ibid.

asserts a third way of justifying this contention. An idea, he says, is of a true and immutable nature (secundum rem), and not merely a fiction constructed by the mind (secundum voces), if it cannot be divided. All fictitious ideas are divisible, and therefore no non-divisible ideas are fictitious. And he suggests that he is going to prove that his idea of God is the idea of a true and immutable nature by proving that it is not divisible.

But in fact he makes no attempt to prove this. Instead he argues: Possible existence is predicable of the idea of God, as it is of all distinct ideas. But when we acknowledge God's existence as possible, we must, at the same time, acknowledge that He can exist by His own power. And then it follows that He always exists.

And it is only now, after the supremely perfect has been proved to exist, that Descartes concludes that the idea of the supremely perfect is that of a true and immutable nature, and not a mere fiction. Thus Descartes has abandoned the attempt to prove that his idea of God is not divisible, so that he may then assert that it is the idea of a true and immutable nature (1). And, instead, he argues, as Anselm does in the Liber Apologeticus: God can be thought to be. When He is thought to be, He must be thought/

(1) Why the fact that an idea is indivisible should be taken to prove that it is the idea of a true and immutable nature, it is difficult to conjecture. But since Descartes cannot prove that the idea of the supremely perfect (or, indeed, any other idea) is indivisible, it is unnecessary to discuss this point.

thought as what cannot be thought not to be. Therefore God cannot be thought not to be.

Descartes' argument has followed the same course as Anselm's, with Caterus following Thomas playing the part of Gaunilo. In the Discours and the Meditationes he began by arguing:

If I have an idea of anything, whatever I clearly and distinctly perceive to belong to that thing does belong to it. I have an idea of God, that is of a being supremely perfect. And I clearly and distinctly perceive that existence belongs to it, since existence is a perfection. Therefore existence belongs to God. And it belongs to God alone, since only in the case of a supremely perfect being can existence and essence not be separated.

Then, under the spur of Caterus' objections, he has radically to alter this argument to that it appears in the form assumed throughout his Responsiones and in the Principia. On the one hand, in order to get beyond idea into existence, he states a general connection between idea and existence. And then, on the other hand, in order to differentiate the existence of God from that of all other things, he distinguishes between necessary and possible existence. Thus the ontological argument now is neither a simple analysis of the idea of the supremely perfect, nor does it hold except in the case of the supremely perfect. It is a particular and unique instance of the general reference/

reference to reality present in any idea. Descartes is on the road to Bradley's formulation of the argument, and what has been said (Paragraph 13) in regard to Bradley applies also to Descartes.

Spinoza's arguments for the existence of God (Ethics, Pars.I, Prop. 11) fall into two groups. The first tries to prove God through his definition simply as substance (id quod in se est et per se concipitur), and it involves a non sequitur of exactly the same kind as is involved in Anselm's second proof in the Liber Apologeticus. The second tries to prove God through his definition as an absolutely infinite substance, and it reduces to an identical proposition.

The first proof: Suppose God does not exist, then since the essence of that which can be conceived as non existing, does not involve existence (Ax. 7), God's essence will not involve existence. But it belongs to substance to exist because, since substance cannot be produced by another, it must be the cause of itself, and so its essence involves existence (Prop. 7). And God is a substance. Therefore God's essence involves existence, and so He cannot be supposed not to exist.

This proof is a re-statement of the proof of Proposition 7: Substance is that which is in itself (Def. 3). therefore it cannot be produced by another (Prop. 6. cor.). Hence it will be its own cause and so it must exist.

And this is simply a non sequitur. Because substance does/

does not exist through another, and so if it does exist must exist through itself, it does not follow that it does exist.

The second proof: The alternative proofs depend on the argument in the Scholium: To be able to exist is power. Therefore the more reality is contained in the nature of anything, the more force it will have to exist. Hence, since God is an absolutely infinite being, He will have absolute power of existing, and therefore will exist absolutely.

Posse existere potentia est seems to be true only if it is an identical proposition, when, that is, it means, posse existere potentia existendi est. If it is not an identical proposition, the potentia which is posse existere needs to be specified and to be proved to be posse existere. And it seems to be impossible to prove that any power other than that of existence is, as a matter of fact, an ability to exist.

Then, granting that God, the absolute infinite, is therefore the absolutely powerful, all that will be obtained will be an identical proposition: That which has absolute power of existing is absolutely able to exist.

The second alternative is stated by Spinoza to be the a posteriori form of this argument: To be able not to exist is powerlessness, and to be able to exist is power. If, then, only finite beings now necessarily exist, then finite beings are more powerful than the absolutely infinite. But this is absurd. Therefore either nothing exists, or the absolutely infinite necessarily/

necessarily exists. But nothing does not exist, because we exist either in ourselves or in another which exists necessarily. Therefore God, the absolutely infinite, exists.

This argument admits of two interpretations: (1) Granted that something exists, the absolutely infinite must exist, because it is more able to exist than anything else. (2) Granted that something exists necessarily, then the absolutely infinite exists, because it is more able to exist than anything else. But since Spinoza does not make it clear what necessario means here (it cannot, I suppose, be regarded as the adverb of necessaria, which seems to be defined in Def. 7 as the opposite of libera), it does not matter which interpretation is adopted. In either case the assertions of the relative ability to be of things or necessary things in relation to the absolutely infinite will reduce to identical propositions. And it is impossible to assert that a thing is to a certain extent merely because it has been defined as what is able to be to a certain degree.

The first alternative, too, depends for its cogency on the argument in the Scholium: A cause or reason ought to be given why anything exists, or why it does not exist. And if no reason or cause can be given why a thing should not exist, then it must be granted to exist. Now, if any reason could be given why God should not exist, that must be either in God or in something other than God. And if it is in something other than God/

God, that other must be of another nature than God. For otherwise it would be granted that God is. But a substance which is of another nature than God will have nothing in common with God (Prop. 2). And so it can neither give Him existence, nor take existence from Him (Ax. 5). Since then, nothing outside God, whether of the same or of a different nature, can prevent his existence, He must exist unless His own nature involves His non-existence. But this cannot be asserted of the absolutely infinite and the supremely perfect. Therefore God necessarily exists.

This reduces to: Since God is substance, and substance is that which is in itself, therefore nothing other than God can prevent His existence. And since God is the absolutely infinite substance, nothing in God can prevent His existence. Therefore, since no reason either outside God or in God can be given why He does not exist, He must exist.

By the first step this argument is related to the first proof. By the second step it is related to the second proof. Grant the first step, then the second depends on the conclusion in the Scholium. Nothing in the absolutely infinite can prevent its existence, because the absolutely infinite is the absolutely powerful, and the absolutely powerful is absolutely able to exist. But this proves nothing, since, as it has been pointed out, the only power which can be granted to confer ability to exist is precisely the power to exist, and thus this argument, along with the argument of the Scholium, is seen to be circular.